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WAR DIARY

German Naval Staff
Operations Division

PART A VOLUME 45

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WAR DIARY OF THE GERMAN NAVAL STAFF

(Operations Division)

UNCLASSIFIED

Part A

May 1943

Chief, Naval Staff:	Grand Admiral Doenitz
Chief of Staff, Naval Staff:	Vice Admiral Meisel
Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff:	Rear Admiral Wagner

Volume 45

begun: 1 May 1943
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DECLASSIFICATION OF WWII RECORDS

OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

Washington, D. C.

Foreword

1. The Office of Naval Intelligence has undertaken to translate important parts of the War Diary of the German Naval Staff. The present volume, entitled War Diary of the German Naval Staff, Operations Division, Part A, Volume 45 is the thirtheenth one of the series to appear. Other volumes will follow shortly.

2. The War Diaries, Part A, are important because they contain a day by day summary of the information available to the German Naval Staff and the decisions reached on the basis thereof. Together with the Fuehrer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy, 1939-1945, which have been published by this office, the War Diaries should provide valuable material for the study of naval problems arising from total war. The War Diary, Part A, is also a useful index to the German Naval Archives of World War II; references may be found in the microfilm library of Naval Records and Library.

3. Due to the cost of publication, only a limited number of copies could be made; it is therefore desirable that the copies which have been distributed are made available to other offices which may be interested.

Washington, D. C.
1948

Items of Political Importance.

The "Neue Zuericher Zeitung" published a report about the transfer of two pocket aircraft carriers from U.S. shipyards to Great Britain. The names TRACKER and SEACHER are cited. These are converted freighters capable of accommodating 20 to 30 planes.

The strength of the British coastal forces amounts to 2,000 officers and 15,000 men, according to Reuter.

Secretary of State Hull canceled all agreements reached with Admiral Robert at Martinique. The U.S. Consul General has been recalled from the island.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Report of the Chief, Operations Branch, Operations Division.

a. The Chief, Naval Staff decides that the NUERNBERG is to be transferred to Strande Bay for the present and not to Wilhelmshaven, as the danger from the air at Wilhelmshaven is so great that anchorage of the ship there over a longer period of time than necessary must be avoided. A transfer into the central and eastern Baltic Sea is out of the question because of the danger from mines.

b. Attention is particularly drawn to the considerable concentration of landing craft in Gibraltar and Alexandria. The Chief, Naval Staff requests that the Commander, Submarines, Italy dispatch an efficient submarine commander into the western Mediterranean where the British fleet carries out its exercises.

II. In connection with the air attack and the damage to the HERMES (see VII) it is reported that this was the first time that a ship ran out of anti-aircraft ammunition. The HERMES carried 12,000 rounds of 2 cm shells on board.

III. In the course of a discussion on the naval offices established in Tunis the Chief, Naval Staff suggested that some special acknowledgement be made to the Chief, Naval Command, Tunisia, Captain Meixner, at the next favorable opportunity.

IV. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that the crews for the naval artillery lighters have been assembled by the Commander of the Flotilla since February. Group South is at present supplementing the personnel in such a manner as to have the boats ready for operations following the completion of repairs. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division had not explicitly ordered trained gunnery personnel to be assigned to these boats. (see War Diary, Part A, 30 Apr.)

V. In connection with the complaint of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South that the Rhone tankers and barges had not been transferred fast enough, the Quartermaster General, Naval Staff, reports that the transfer and assembly had been turned over to the Reich Commissioner for Shipping.

VI. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports on the regulations for the employment of naval forces against enemy landings on Sardinia and Corsica issued by the Italian Navy. These regulations call for specific conditions and do not do justice to all situations.

The Chief, Naval Staff comments that the only profitable thing to do is to hold Tunis, and, therefore, all efforts should be concentrated on Tunis now, in order to deprive the enemy of the chance of attacking Sardinia. (For regulations see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIII as per 1/Skl 1277/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

VII. The Commander, Submarines, Italy had been ordered to clear up the question of active employment of Italian submarines with the Italian Admiral. On this occasion the Italian Admiralty maintained the opinion that, because an enemy landing is expected on Sardinia, the planned advanced patrol positions off Sardinia must continue to be manned. In opposition to the suggestion that the Leros submarines should be employed, the Italian Admiralty produced in defense the explicit request of Group South that the boats be retained in the Aegean area. (As per 1/Skl 1278/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

Group South reports in this connection that the Leros boats were to be placed under the command of Group South only in the case VIKTORIA when the Aegean Sea would be seriously menaced. Group South has established contact with the Admiral, Dodecanese with regard to the operation of the boats, following the new agreement between the Naval Staff and the Italian Admiralty. The Group plans to operate the boats off Syria - Cyprus - Palestine. (Details are contained in 1/Skl 1294/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

The German Naval Command, Italy and Group South, therefore, received the following order from Naval Staff on 1 May:

"Naval Staff considers the operation of the Leros submarines in the Tripolis - Benghazi area necessary, as the focal point of operations lies in the central Mediterranean and orders the German Naval Command, Italy to make the necessary arrangements with the Italian Admiralty." (1/Skl 1301/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

The Chief, Naval Staff does not consider the operation of the boats in the Aegean Sea worth while, and asks for a concentration of all forces at the focal point of operations.

VIII. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports on wide-spread protest strikes in the Netherlands, as a result of which water and electricity supplies have been partly interrupted. The strikes have broken out owing to orders to transfer Dutch officers and men back into captivity.

Special Items.

Employment of Italian destroyers in the Tunis supply traffic.

The damage to the HERMES and the loss of an Italian destroyer have caused the greatest concern both to the Italian Navy and the German Admiral attached to the Italian Admiralty, Vice Admiral Ruge. They are in agreement that the employment of additional destroyers would be unsuccessful and represents only a vain sacrifice.

Vice Admiral Ruge, therefore, had his Operations Officer report by telephone in the afternoon of 30 Apr. that the commitment of the destroyers was no longer justified, and requested a quick decision which must have the approval of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South (1/Skl 1289/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

The reasons for this request have been set forth at length in a supplementary teletype. It was stated in this teletype that the daylight passage is well-nigh impossible because of the great enemy air superiority, and that the night passage would involve a most serious risk owing to the intense activity of surface forces, even if an occasional passage might be successful.

The reply of Naval Staff reads as follows:

The Commander in Chief, Navy considers the commitment of the destroyers for the Tunisian transports quite in order, and does not intend to interfere. The matter will be further discussed in Berlin on 1 May. (1/Skl I a 1293/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

At the same time the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South transmitted a detailed survey of the situation and a report on his negotiations with the Italian Navy. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South is opposed to the daylight passage, which he claims has been scheduled against his emphatic warnings.

The enemy is carrying out daylight attacks with such forces as to place even 60 of our own fighters at a disadvantage. The danger from the air by night has been judged to be less severe, particularly as our own jamming gear interferes with the locations of the enemy air forces. It is necessary for the air and naval defense to be increased as much as possible. Relevant orders have been issued to the Air Force. It will not be possible to avoid losses at night. Vice Admiral Ruge was called to be present at the discussions between the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South and the Italian Navy for the first time on 29 Apr. (Details are contained in 1/Skl 1295/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

In the afternoon of 1 May, Vice Admiral Ruge arrived in Berlin as ordered, and reported to the Chief, Naval Staff. There, a detailed discussion on the Tunis supply situation took place with the following participating: the German Admiral attached to the Italian Admiralty; the Italian Chief of Staff attached to the German Special Staff, Commander Sestini; the Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff, at the same time acting for the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff; the Quartermaster General, Naval Staff; and the Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division.

Vice Admiral Ruge gave a survey of the situation with regard to Tunisian convoys. He depicted the grave and increasing difficulties standing in the way of the execution of the convoys, and emphasized in particular that there is no control over the menace from enemy surface forces in the northern part of the Straits of Sicily, nor the mine situation in the central part, and least of all over the danger from the air, which is just as great by day as by night. He considers there is so little prospect of a successful crossing by large-sized vessels, including destroyers, as to render their commitment no longer worth while.

Commander Sestini reported the opinion of the Italian Navy on the question as to whether still further Italian naval forces are to be used for the supply traffic to Tunisia. According to Italian opinion, Tunis can no longer be saved. All means must now be used for the defense of Sardinia and Sicily. The Italian Fleet, including destroyers which are indispensible to the operation of the fleet, must be retained for this task. Their commitment would no longer carry weight for the support of Tunis, as the fall of Tunis is said to be imminent anyway, whereas the saving of the fleet might be of decisive importance in the defense of Sardinia and Sicily.

Chief, Naval Staff emphatically repudiated these objections. It would be fallacy to believe that the Italian Fleet can prevent an occupation of Sardinia and Sicily. It would not be anywhere near in a position to do so in view of British superiority. The best protection for Italy was the holding of the Tunis bridgehead. As long as this position is held, a landing in Italy or on her islands could hardly be expected. For this reason everything must be done to hold Tunis. Days and weeks might count. To sacrifice the fleet for this task would be of greater benefit than to save it for tasks to come. It is true, all ships would have to be thrown in, in the event of an attack on the islands, but nevertheless, they could not prevent a landing in the face of such enemy superiority.

The decision regarding the holding of the bridgehead in Tunisia rests with the Supreme Command. It will not do for the Navy to suddenly withdraw its support while the other services of the Armed Forces are fighting desperately to hold on. The obligation to the troops battling on land makes it imperative for all naval forces to rally to their support. The alternative in this case is either to hold Tunis, which is tantamount to the Navy committing everything, or to let the armored corps surrender.

The Supreme Command has issued orders that Tunisia is to be held. The Chief, Naval Staff is convinced that this decision is the only one possible. Therefore, the Navy, too, must throw itself into the task with all means available.

The outcome of this discussion has been reported in 1/Skl 1295/43 Gkdos. Chefs. (in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.) to the Operations Staff together with the comments on the situation made by Commanding General, Armed Forces, South. The reasons for the voyage of the HERMES are set out in detail; it is reported that because of serious losses at that time the night passage was abandoned; an increase in the capacity of repair shipyards is called for, and attention is drawn to the increase in enemy pressure against the Tunisian supplies.

In conclusion the Chief, Naval Staff reported personally:

A. In order to be able to take into full consideration any changes in the situation at any time, the participation of Admiral Ruge through the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South in fundamental discussions at the Italian Admiralty is a prime necessity.

B. I am of the opinion that, in spite of the increasing difficulties reported, the continuation of the supplies to Tunisia must be enforced with all means available, even by the employment of naval forces as transports.

Situation 1 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Enemy reconnaissance in the Bay of Biscay was normal with 28 planes participating.

Ten FW 200's, which were on long-range reconnaissance yesterday, did not locate the convoy which was supposed to be west of the Bay of Biscay. At 1154 a British minelaying cruiser of the ADVENTURE class steering a course of 200° at slow speed was sighted in BE 6312, also at 0725 an Irish freighter of 3,000 BRT on a course of 30° in BE 6365.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast Area:

The torpedo boats T "2", "5", "18", and "23" entered Cherbourg in the

course of their transfer from La Pallice to Le Havre. The boats are to be used at Le Havre for a mining operation.

At 1110 an air raid on St. Nazaire was carried out by 80 four-engined bombers. Fifty incendiary bombs were dropped without causing any military damage or casualties. Two planes were shot down.

The Gironde and entrance to La Pallice is no longer closed to shipping.

Channel Area:

The 4th and 6th PT Boat Flotillas carried out the scheduled mining operation and returned to Boulogne at 0102.

At 1145 on 30 Apr. planes carried out a machine-gun attack on the aircraft tender IMMELMANN 25 km north of Quessant; two of the crew were killed and several injured.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

At 0545 an engagement with enemy PT boats took place at the patrol boat position "Mainz". The patrol boat "1241" was sunk by gunfire. The other three patrol boats were likewise hit causing casualties on all boats.

At 1845 on 30 Apr. the Swedish steamer GUDRUN (1,521 BRT), carrying ore, struck a ground mine in AN 8556 (near Ijmuiden). The ship was towed into port.

The anti-aircraft vessel "23" was machine-gunned by two Spitfires in AN 8326 (north of Ameland). One man was killed; six others, among them the commander, were seriously wounded.

Five ELM/J's were swept between Ameland and the Elbe.

The harbor defense boat B "04" fired on two enemy planes in the Hubertgat at 1515 and observed hits.

For a short review of the situation by the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North dated 1 May, see 1/Skl 12701/43 Gkdos. The Flag Officer asks for various counter-measures to be taken, which are necessary because of the continuously increasing enemy action against our coastal approaches. He declares he has no further means of providing a better defense, nor does he anticipate that any improvement would be gained by shifting the times of the convoys at this time of year, because of the short nights.

In particular he considers the continued provision of a strong fighter escort by the Air Force absolutely imperative.

The plans for the transfer of the tanker TAIFUN from Antwerp to the Heligoland Bight, and of ship "5" from Rotterdam, are reported by the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North in 0107 Gkdos. 1 May (1/Skl 12702/43 Gkdos.).

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance sighted a large vessel accompanied by two small ones in 4288 AF at 0745, and observed three additional vessels nearby being hidden behind a smoke-screen. No further details were observed because of poor visibility. Renewed reconnaissance is being organized.

Own Situation:

Shortly after midnight on 29 Apr. two British PT boats landed 40 to 50 men on the unoccupied island of Hooden (61° 41'N, 4° 52.3'E), locked the Norwegian inhabitants in cellars, occupied the telephone station and cut the cable, so that the first report could not be made until 0510 this morning after the departure of the boats westward.

The PT boat S "10" and, later on, additional minesweepers will be sent to examine the surrounding sea area and to search the island.

At 0155 two torpedoes, which missed their mark, were fired from a submarine at the minesweeper M "401" in 8734 AF.

On the north Norwegian coast numerous planes were observed by day yesterday and today in the area between Bergen and Lister.

The Naval Shore Commander, Oslofjord reports that three sabotage mines with delayed action devices and additional ammunition were found on the island of Bleikoeya in the Oslofjord in the evening of 30 Apr. An investigation is in progress.

In the arctic region no damage was caused during air raids on the battery Berlevaag and on Kirkenes.

The cruiser NUERNBERG with the BEITZEN, JAGUAR, GREIF, and the torpedo boat T "24" continued her passage south according to plan. The formation was intercepted by British air reconnaissance, whereupon the enemy detailed several planes to operate in the evening hours. However, they flew past our ships to the south because the formation made a diversion round the island of Karmoey, and were successfully engaged in battle by our own fighter escort, and forced off towards the west. The order to turn about and steer for Bergen reached the ship when the commander was already convinced that the operation planned by the enemy was over and beaten off. Contrary to this order, therefore, the formation continued its passage, reporting its position, and reached the minefield gap off Kristiansand South without further incidents shortly before dawn.

This action was correct and turned out successfully.

Convoys on 1 May:

Arctic coast area:	7 steamers	north,
	8 "	south;
North Norwegian coast area:	2 "	north,
	5 "	south;
West Norwegian coast area:	18 "	north,
	9 "	south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

As a result of extensive mining by enemy air forces the Swedish ferry Copenhagen - Malmoe struck a mine and had to be beached on the Swedish coast. Unfortunately the ferry service has been interrupted and is to be resumed on 12 May by a Danish ferry.

Several mines were swept in the area of the Baltic Sea entrances.

A British twin-engined minelaying plane was shot down off Rixhoeft on 29 Apr. In the Gulf of Finland the barrage "Seeigel I a" was laid according to plan. The first net north of Porkalla has been completed, the laying of the second net has commenced. Noise from submarines steering west was reported from the island of Hogland in 3288 AO. The convoy traffic is running according to schedule.

V. Submarine Warfare.

The submarines of Group "Drossel", on operations off the Bay of Biscay, were informed on the negative result of the air reconnaissance on 1 May, repetition of which has been scheduled for 2 May.

The attention of the boats on outward passage through the Bay of Biscay was also drawn to this air reconnaissance. They are to hold themselves in readiness for the reception of D/F signals, in so far as they are on the surface.

From Group "Specht" and "Amsel" the submarine "628" reported several smoke clouds in BC 2215 in the evening. Group "Specht" has been dispatched to make a search.

Group "Star" received orders to break off the operation at dusk, if it should not succeed in its efforts to establish contact. In the South Atlantic the

submarine U "515" reported a burning freighter of 7,000 BRT in ET 6128 and a hit on two additional freighters of 6,000 BRT, whose sinking was probable. It can be assumed that these are ships of the same convoy, which had already been successfully attacked yesterday. The submarine U "182" returning from the Cape area sank the steamer ADELFOTIS (5,838 BRT) in FD 6884 carrying linseed.

Further details are contained in the Supplement to "Submarine Situation" in War Diary, Part B, Vol. IV.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Thirty five planes of the 3rd Air Force were on operations.

Ninety enemy planes in two groups flew over the Lorient - St. Nazaire area between 2235 and 0350, six of them flew as far as the mouth of the Gironde. It is assumed that mines were laid. There were no planes over Reich territory.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

An enemy convoy of 16 merchant vessels and ten patrol boats was sighted northeast of Benghazi at 1345 and attacked with eight aerial torpedoes and 16 bombers at night. On this occasion three aerial torpedo hits were scored on one steamer of 8,000 BRT and another hit on a steamer of 6,000 BRT.

3. Eastern Front:

One hundred and sixty four planes of the 5th Air Force were on operations. In the evening the focal point of operations was the sea area off Stavanger, against the enemy planes attacking our NUERNBERG formation. Twelve enemy planes were shot down by fighters and anti-aircraft artillery and the loss of one further enemy plane is probable.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

Shortly after 0100 a small convoy which had already been reported from Tangier as steering east entered the Mediterranean via the Straits of Gibraltar.

At 1450 seventeen landing craft sailed from Gibraltar for the Mediterranean; some of them lay deep in the water and presumably carried armored cars.

The aircraft carrier FORMIDABLE, presumably belonging to Task Force H, was 24 miles north of Cape Tenes at 0230, according to the Italian radio intelligence. Air reconnaissance sighted a westbound convoy west of Alboren at 0758.

North of Cape Serrat (Tunisian coast) three destroyers were steering east at 1816.

Lively enemy convoy traffic was observed in the vicinity of the Lybian and Egyptian coast.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

The supply traffic for Tunis suffered serious losses as the result of enemy air action on 30 Apr.

The Italian destroyer PENCALDO sank in the Straits of Sicily while en route to Tunis after severe bomb hits. Continuous air attacks, in the course of which the entire supply of anti-aircraft ammunition had been used up by noon, were directed against the German destroyer HERMES which was accompanying the latter. In the afternoon the destroyer was hit by bombs of medium caliber 30 miles off the Tunisian coast, putting both engines out of commission. The ship was successfully towed close to the shore, the troops were disembarked by raft, and the destroyer, which was out of control, was anchored close under cover of land off Ras el Fortas.

The Italian destroyer LAMPO, which sailed without escort carrying war materials from Trapani to Tunis, was hit by bombs and sank six miles east of Celibia at 1900. The motor minesweeper of foreign origin RA "10", one of the small vessels coming to her rescue from Bizerta, received a direct hit in the engine room during an attack by fighter-bombers, and sank two miles south of Cape Bon at 1600. One fighter-bomber was shot down.

The steamer CAMPO BASSO en route from Naples to Tunis received orders from the Italian Admiralty off Pantelleria at 0400 to proceed to Trapani. The steamer BELLUNO en route escorted by two Italian torpedo boats is likewise to proceed to Trapani.

Only the small ship traffic to Tunisia is running to schedule.

Two boats of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla carried out a mine fouling operation at the southwest corner of the warning area north of Ras el Koran.

Auxiliary motor minesweepers cleared two British Mark "XVI" mines from the mine field 15 miles west-southwest of Trapani. Examination of the Marettimo mine field was completed without any results.

The war transport KT "21" did not sink, as was assumed on 30 Apr., but proceeded to the Straits of Messina according to plan.

A German submarine scored a probable hit on an eastbound tanker convoy in the western Mediterranean.

3. Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Two troop transports carrying Italian troops and escorted by one destroyer and one torpedo boat put in to Iraklion coming from Piraeus. The salvage operations on the stranded steamer FRONSAC had to be suspended because of weather conditions. All other tasks were carried out according to plan. No enemy was sighted.

Black Sea:

During the night the motor minesweepers R "35" and R "163" carried out the operation planned against the beachhead of Novorossisk. On arrival at 2230, the boats succeeded in making a surprise bombardment of the landing place, encountering only weak enemy defense. Following the firing, the boats were forced off and prevented from making further attacks by the appearance of strong enemy patrol forces (three to four gunboats, four PT boats). In the course of the engagement with the gunboats, hits were observed on one of the enemy boats. No supply traffic was observed. On their return passage the boats took part in a brief gunfire duel at close range ten miles south of Anapa with two enemy PT boats steering southeast. An explosion, followed by a high tongue of flame, occurred after a positive hit on one of the enemy boats. The boat was almost certainly annihilated.

Shortly after midnight Anapa was shelled from the sea with light and medium caliber guns; Ivanbaba was also shelled toward 0340. The enemy vessels were estimated to have been at a distance of 200 - 250 km; they were assumed to be destroyers. No successes by our own shore batteries were observed. No serious damage was inflicted. The coastal traffic and the Anapa transports have, however, been halted owing to this appearance of enemy forces.

At 0230 the enemy landed light forces from eight landing craft northeast of the mouth of the Kuban. Three naval landing craft taken from the Genichesk - Temriuk traffic, as well as the Group of Foreign Motor Minesweepers were detailed to operate against these enemy landings.

In the evening three PT boats and two motor minesweepers from Kerch formed a patrol line off the coast, north of Temriuk. In the course of the day these enemy troops were either annihilated or taken prisoner by army forces.

The submarine U "19" set out for Constanta on her return passage from the operational area. No successes were reported.

Other convoy traffic is running according to plan.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

The foreign press continues to be very much occupied with the break in the relations between Russia and Poland, and is combining wishful thinking with alleged steps taken by Great Britain and the U.S.A.

A report from Turkey states that the break in relations between the U.S.A. and Finland has been postponed. It is said that Washington plans to use its relations with Finland as a means of pressure on the USSR.

London broadcasts a report from Ottawa, according to which it has been decided at a secret naval conference between Great Britain, the U.S.A., and Canada that Great Britain and Canada will assume responsibility for the safety of the convoys in the North Atlantic. The Commanding Admiral, Northwest Atlantic is the Canadian Rear Admiral Murray, who has the same duties as the Commanding Admiral, Western Approaches. Air forces operating against the submarines are under the control of the two Commanding Admirals. The U.S.A. will furnish the escorts for the South Atlantic, and planes, escort vessels, and crews for the protection of convoys in the North Atlantic.

Admiral Robert on Martinique has not yet replied to the American cancellation of the agreements.

In the countries of the Near East, the laying up of all civilian cars and the priority transport for all war materiel are to be noted as a result of a conference on transport in Cairo.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. In the course of a telephone conversation the Chief, Naval Staff was informed by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, Field Marshal Kesselring, that nothing had been gained in a discussion between the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South and the General of the Army, Ambrosio on the question of employment of additional destroyers in the Tunis supply traffic. Ambrosio bases his refusal among other things on the views of the German admirals, who are no longer in favor of employing additional destroyers. In this way the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South stands alone in opposition to the Italians.

The Chief, Naval Staff disapproves of this contrariness between the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South and the Naval Commanders and issues the following order to the German Naval Command Italy, the German Special Staff, with copy to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South:

"The order issued by the Fuehrer calls for the maintenance of the supply traffic to Tunis with all available means. Considerations with regard to the retention of naval forces for other purposes are, therefore, out of place. I am of the opinion that all means of naval warfare should be employed in support of the Tunisian traffic regardless of any attacks on Italy or the large islands which may be expected later."

(1/Skl 1309/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV).

Chief, Naval Staff will impress once more on Admiral Ruge, who is still with the Naval Staff, the unquestionable nature of the orders, and the demands which are to be carried into effect in Italy. He will subsequently return to Rome.

II. Report of the Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division.

The Chief, Naval Staff comments favorably on the independent decision of the Commander of the NUERNBERG not to turn about, since the actual situation was different from that known to the Operations Staff.

III. Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that the torpedo boats in Toulon are to make their trial runs on 3 May, and that four motor minesweepers and three anti-aircraft corvettes will be ready for operations at Marseilles on 16 May.

Special Items.

I. A request made by the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West for the reinforcement of the motor minesweepers caused the Naval Staff to make a thorough examination of the available forces and their distribution. Considering the forces available, the request of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West had to be rejected after the requirements in all theaters of war had been weighed. A reinforcement of his motor minesweeper forces can only be considered in relation to new constructions. (Copies as per 1/Skl I op 12353/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. d.)

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch, decided on the following designations for the former French torpedo boats:

BOMBARDE	TA	" 9"
LA POMONE	TA	"10"
IPHIGENIE	TA	"11"
BALLISTE	TA	"12"
LA BAYONNAISE	TA	"13"

(1/Skl 13268/43 geh.).

Situation 2 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

Italian reports speak of a large troop convoy which left Capetown in the middle of April bound for Syria. The following ships formed a part of this convoy: One ship of the QUEEN MARY class, one of the MAURETANIA class, one ship of 15,000 BRT, and several of standard size. A convoy returning from India lay in Capetown in the middle of April.

2. Own Situation:

1. The British secret radio station GS "I" broadcast at the end of April a somewhat confused report on the explosion of the UCKERMARK in Yokohama. The Japanese are said to have arrested the crews of the UCKERMARK and the REGENSBURG in retaliation, and to have confiscated the REGENSBURG in compensation for the damage caused to a Japanese vessel incidental to this explosion.

2. The naval correspondent of the "Daily Herald" stated in an article dated 20 Apr. that the Allies had seized six German blockade runners in the first three months of this year. The article dealt at great length with the route and the type of the German blockade runners.

3. The Naval Attaché, Tokyo has been requested to submit instructions concerning sailing and conduct in the southern Japanese area for Italian transport submarines. (See Telegram 1245.)

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Towards evening our air reconnaissance detected two incoming ships off Portland and twelve merchant vessels off Great Yarmouth.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast Area:

Two minesweepers were unsuccessfully machine-gunned by 14 bombers off Brest on 1 May. One enemy plane was shot down.

One ground mine was swept off Lorient and one off the Gironde.

Channel Area:

One of our own convoys was fired on by a British long-range battery during the night of 1 May. At the same time the battery Todt shelled Dover, Folkestone, and Deal.

The task planned for the torpedo boats lying in Le Havre had to be cancelled because of the weather conditions.

A minesweeper picked up a rubber dinghy containing five Americans off St. Brieux on 2 May.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

In the afternoon a raid on the blast furnaces at Ijmuiden took place. No damage. The railway embankment near Ijmuiden was hit. The traffic has been interrupted. One plane was shot down by naval anti-aircraft guns.

Own Situation:

Six ground mines were swept off the Frisian islands.

Convoy traffic ran to schedule. Minesweeping operations were suspended because of the weather conditions.

The torpedo boats T "9" and T "12" proceeded on their passage from Dunkerque to the Elbe according to plan.

An anti-aircraft vessel was attacked by two Spitfires off the Ems estuary. There were slight casualties.

The minelaying operation "Telemark" was carried out according to plan.

A mine-exploding vessel was seriously damaged by a ground mine off Schiermonekoog, but was able to put into Cuxhaven under its own steam.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

It is reported from Portugal that a convoy for Murmansk is supposed to leave Glasgow early in May and to join another convoy from Belfast.

Air reconnaissance detected two icebreakers, a medium-sized freighter and several small ones at Molotovsk.

Three Russian submarines were lying off the Arctic coast, according to radio intelligence.

Air reconnaissance over the North Sea was normal. Four planes of the Iceland squadrons were on operations.

An enemy submarine was sighted 140 miles west of the Foldafjord in the early hours of the morning of 2 May.

Own Situation:

A submarine attack on a convoy off the Syltefjord was carried out in the afternoon of 1 May. The same convoy was attacked with aerial torpedoes and gunfire off Kiberg in the evening. Several aerial torpedoes missed their mark. In conjunction with the air escort two or three enemy planes were shot down.

The Air Force reports that twelve planes were shot down by fighters and three by anti-aircraft guns in the evening of 1 May off Stavanger. All planes were of the Beaufighter type and included new torpedo plane models.

The renewed reconnaissance following the enemy sighting of 1 May in AF 42 did not bring any additional results. The unreliable reports received from planes do not give a clear picture of the situation.

Twenty one ships were escorted north and 14 south.

Four submarines to be known as Group "Monsun", are being dispatched to the area south of Bear Island.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

The passage of the NUERNBERG formation proceeded according to plan. The minelayer OSTMARK, the torpedo boat MOEVE entered Kristiansand South on 2 May; the minelayer BRUMMER is en route to Kristiansand South.

Two ships and one submarine were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic; 23 vessels were on operations sweeping the channels.

The passenger steamer GNEISENAU (18,160 BRT) assigned to serve as a troop accommodation ship for a submarine anti-aircraft detachment struck a mine and sank off Darsserort while en route to Swinemuende. The Danish motorship ERNA struck a mine and sank west of Moen. A mine exploded in a fishing net off Seelandsrev.

The battery "Strelna" destroyed a Russian observation post equipped with a radio antenna on the Leningrad mole on 30 Apr. Numerous patrol vessels were observed between Leningrad and Kronstadt. They were fired on by our own batteries. Enemy air activity off Tytersaari was lively. Two Russian planes caught fire and crashed.

The Finnish gunboat TURUNMAAS was hit by bombs and sank.

A double-line net barrage was laid off Porkalla. The 25th Minesweeper Flotilla and two minesweepers are clearing the minefields "Warthburg II" and "III".

Special Items.

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic ordered that on the basis of the newly found British mines with magnetic acoustic combination, two escort vessels against ground mines, rather than one as heretofore, are to be assigned to each convoy. In this connection the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic reports that owing to the shortage of mine-exploding vessels the majority of the escorts will have to be carried out by boats fitted with a towed cylinder gear, that the number of convoys will be decreased because of the doubled commitment of escort vessels, and that the speed will be reduced from 9 knots to from 5 to 6 knots because of the boats using towed-cylinder-gear.

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance over the Bay of Biscay was very lively, 40 planes having been observed. One submarine was heavily bombed. Close air escort and pickup by surface forces have been provided.

2. Own Situation:

Group "Specht" was dispatched to search in AJ 88 for a convoy which had been contacted for a short while by a submarine. Group "Amsel" was reinforced by five boats.

The submarine U "235", a boat of Group "Star", heard a definite explosion each time after firing a quadruple and double torpedo spread in AD 78. The boat had to start on her return passage because of damage from depth charges. The submarine U "192" fired a triple torpedo spread and heard one explosion. Additional observations were not possible because of the seaway and the defense. Group "Star", still consisting of 13 boats, received orders to operate against a convoy which was reported by one of the boats.

Our own air reconnaissance was unable to take off for Group "Drossel" because of weather conditions.

The boats leaving home waters received orders to report the passing of Iceland - Faeroes on request only, and to transmit a short signal only when passing the latitude of AL 21.

The rendezvous of the submarine U "117" with an Italian submarine did not take place. The boat has started on her return passage.

Two boats were dispatched for operations off Freetown.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

British Isles and Vicinity:

Sixty one planes of the 3rd Air Force were on operations in the western area, seven in the Mediterranean.

The air activity in the western area during the day was of medium strength. The air raid on the blast furnaces at Ijmuiden reported under the heading "Situation West Area" was repeated by 18 Venturas and 25 Spitfires toward evening. Considerable damage was caused. Three Venturas and seven Spitfires were shot down.

An enemy reconnaissance plane penetrated as far as Frankfurt-on-Main at an altitude of 8,000 m in the afternoon.

There were no incursions from the west during the night of 2 May. Fifteen planes flew in from the east without dropping bombs. One plane was shot down by night fighters near Gumbinnen.

Three planes were engaged on courier flights to Sweden.

Sixteen of our planes fouled the convoy channel between the Humber and the Thames during the night of 2 May.

Mediterranean Theater:

Operations in the Mediterranean were restricted by sand storms. Therefore, an operation by 25 bombers and 12 aerial torpedo planes against the convoy in the eastern Mediterranean which had already been attacked on the preceding day had to be broken off.

In April 5,040 tons of material and 883 men were transported by the Air Force from Italy to Africa.

Losses: 76 Ju 52's, 14 Me 323's, 275 men and 212 tons of material.

Eastern Front:

No reports on enemy planes shot down were received.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

A convoy of 18 ships left Gibraltar for the Atlantic early in the morning of 2 May. At noon a convoy of twelve freighters, four tankers, one transport, and three escort vessels, put in from the Atlantic, and an additional convoy of about ten freighters from the Mediterranean. The following vessels left for the Mediterranean in the evening: One ship specially designed for armored car transports, 25 landing craft transport ships carrying on deck one landing craft each, one destroyer, ten U.S. submarine chasers, and one ocean-going tug.

Photographic reconnaissance of Bone revealed the following vessels: two light cruisers, two destroyers, eleven LCT's, twelve LCM's, three aircraft tenders, eleven PT boats or submarine chasers, 15 additional PT boats, ten auxiliary war vessels, twelve freighters, one tanker. Toward evening three PT boats apparently left Bone, and were later on sighted north of Tabarca steering east.

Air reconnaissance detected three destroyers north of Cape Bon during the night of 2 May. These destroyers have been reported over a period of several hours in the same sea area. Thirteen bombers were detailed to attack them. No reports on successes have yet been received.

One enemy submarine was north of Salerno at noon on 1 May, and one off the northwest tip of Sardinia in the forenoon of 2 May.

The exploratory reconnaissance off Alexandria and in the coastal approaches of Ras el Daba as far as Derna on 2 May was without results.

Twenty three ships steering west were sighted off Cape Misurata at noon. Reconnaissance in the area around Cyprus brought no enemy sighting.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Two Italian submarines were in the operational area. There were no PT boats on operations during the night of 1 May because of weather conditions. It is planned to use them as lateral defense for convoys when the weather improves.

The HERMES was attacked three times from the air in the course of 2 May without damage being inflicted. The destroyer was towed into La Goulette and dropped anchor there at 0200 in the night of 2 May. It has been reported that a temporary repair to the engines is not possible. The commander suggested dismantling the armament. The German Naval Command has consented to this suggestion and has ordered the dismantling to be carried out in La Goulette. Only essential members of the crew are to be left on board. The Naval Command Tunisia will take over command of the boat and the crew until further notice.

The transfer of the Staff of the Naval Command Tunisia to the Bon peninsula is in the course of preparation. The execution is planned after release of the order for the blowing up of Bizerta (keyword "Odessa").

The German Naval Command Italy has reported the sea area which was fouled during the night of 1 May by the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla. (See Telegram 1323.)

Report of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South on the ground situation.

On 1 May: The enemy has been able to penetrate our lines in the northern sector of the western front at three places, and is offering extremely stubborn resistance to the German counterthrust. In the southwestern sector the enemy withdrew again in certain places. Following a one-hour's barrage, the enemy pushed closer to the positions of the Italian XX Army Corps on the southern front. The fighting strength, the ammunition and fuel supplies are slowly dwindling as a result of the continuous fierce battles. The situation of the Army Group must be regarded as serious in spite of the successful counterattacks.

On 2 May: There were no large-scale actions on the entire front aside from artillery fire on both sides. The situation on the northern wing of the west front continues to be critical as it will be impossible for our weak forces to withstand the superior enemy pressure. From the strikingly slight enemy activity it may be concluded that renewed large-scale attacks are being prepared.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

Six Siebel ferries and three infantry landing craft entered Marsala from Tunis in the evening of 1 May. The sailing of the war transport KT "11" of the convoy BELLUNO had to be postponed for 24 hours.

Special Items.

a. The German Naval Command, Italy and the German Special Staff received the following order as regards the supply service to Tunis and protection of the traffic.

"It followed from the discussions in Berlin that for the Tunisian supply traffic the night passage will once again come more into the foreground as against the daytime passage. The danger from enemy naval forces necessitates the employment of all available means to protect them.

For this reason, the German PT boats are also to be employed; this will be their main task, and minelaying tasks will have to take second priority." (See 1/Skl 1275/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

b. The German Naval Command, Italy and the Commander, Submarines, Italy have been informed that the Chief, Naval Staff considers it would be desirable to detail a well-tried submarine with an experienced commander to the area east of Gibraltar where the main British naval forces carry out their exercises; they are asked to report their views. (1/Skl 1300/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

The Commander, Submarines, Italy reports in this connection:

1. It is not planned to operate submarines east of Gibraltar at present, as

a. heavy enemy units are at present in the area of Oran, according to data available here;

b. of all commanders at present stationed in this area only Lt. Franken, who is, however, about to complete an exacting operation, is sufficiently experienced;

c. the effect of a possible anti-submarine warning in the Gibraltar area might be detrimental to the boats at present expected to arrive in that area.

2. The recent experiences made by the submarine U "81" in the sea area east of Gibraltar in December showed that a stay of any duration was no more than just possible to the most experienced commander, but did not bring any results. However, a brief operation is considered possible and, given the presence of heavy forces and the assignment to a clever commander, holding promise of success.

3. The plans are, therefore, to dispatch a fresh and suitable boat after the heavy units have put in to Gibraltar. The past conduct of the enemy, who at first remained in the harbor for about a week and then commenced exercises, fits in well with the intended procedure, according to the opinion held here.

(1/Skl 1306/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

The Chief, Naval Staff concurs with the suggestions of the Commander, Submarines, Italy.

c. The German Naval Command Italy submitted a summary of the losses incurred in the African traffic in April 1943. Out of a total of 32 ships, eight were lost on their passage to Tunisia, and three on their return passage. Attacks from the air comprising 68 % hold first place among the causes of the ships' losses. Losses through submarines follow with 19.3 %, mines with 4.2 %, destroyers with 1.6 %. The following escort and supply forces were sunk at sea and in harbor: 3 destroyers, 3 torpedo boats, and 2 submarine chasers; 1 destroyer and 4 torpedo boats damaged. For details see Telegram 1325.

d. Naval Staff reports in 1/Skl 12605/43 Gkdos. to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff on the state of war transport ships as follows:

1. Built to date: 14 in all, of which:

a. 3 were lost;

b. 3 were turned over to Italy (it is not known when they will become operational);

c. 6 operational;

d. 2 whose operational readiness is doubtful.

2. Additions: 3 in April (30 Apr.), 1 in May (15 May), 2 in June (1 and 15 June), none in July/August.

e. The German Naval Command, Italy received the following order from Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch as the decision reached by the Chief, Naval Staff with regard to the speedy assembly of the French torpedo boats in Toulon:

1. Degaussing gear; not to be fitted;

2. trials and exercises absolutely necessary for operational readiness are to be carried out, whereby restrictions in full war readiness must be taken into account;

3. it is imperative that the boats be dispatched on operations as quickly as possible;

4. the deadlines for operational readiness are to be reported as soon as a clear idea regarding them can be formed;

5. inform Commanding General, Armed Forces, South accordingly. (1/Skl 12931/43 Gkdos.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

1. Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

In the course of the day six to seven enemy planes flew over the southeastern area as far as Nish.

Two reconnaissance planes were sighted at noon in the northeastern part of the Aegean Sea off Nikaria.

The dropping of six aerial mines was reported southwest of Siphnos.

The Italian submarine chaser CAPRI was first unsuccessfully bombed by enemy planes on 1 May, and subsequently set ablaze by gunfire and sunk.

Own Situation:

In connection with the special operation of the Naval Shore Commander, Attica, it has been reported that the situation at sea is unchanged. The Italian Admiralty has been requested for naval support for the Italian drive on the mainland. Escort duties were carried out according to plan.

2. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

The photographic reconnaissance of Gelenjik at noon on 2 May showed the following vessels: 6 motor minesweepers, 10 PT boats, and 2 coastal vessels. No shipping was detected between Anapa and Batum in the forenoon.

Two Italian PT boats were sunk during an air raid on Feodosia. An air raid on Sevastopol caused only slight damage.

Own Situation:

PT boats, Italian PT boats, and motor minesweepers were on operations during the night of 1 May. In spite of the bright night there was neither shipping nor patroling, but lively air activity was observed south of Gelenjik. Four Italian PT boats left Feodosia in the afternoon of 2 May for operations between Gelenjik and Tuapse. Two additional Italian PT boats have been assigned for anti-submarine activity off the south Crimean coast.

Two PT boats were detailed to operate against vessels observed from shore off Myshakov. The boats returned without any results.

One of our own planes sank an enemy PT boat about 25 miles west of Novorossisk on the morning of 1 May. The Commanding Admiral, Black Sea assumes this to be the partner of the PT boat sunk by motor minesweepers shortly before, and that in this way the report on the success of the motor minesweepers has been confirmed. Escort duties in the Black Sea were carried out without special incident. The Anapa transports and the Temriuk ferry service ran to schedule.

Special Items:

In a report Group South points out the weak anti-aircraft defense of Sevastopol, which is at variance with the importance of the supply traffic passing through this port. Group South urgently requests considerable reinforcement of the anti-aircraft defense at Sevastopol (see Telegram 2022).

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

The De Gaulle Committee announced over the radio that Allied military operations against Martinique must without doubt be expected. Energetic resistance on the part of Admiral Robert is expected according to a report from Washington.

The Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs declared on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Argentine constitution that Argentina was firmly resolved to remain independent and ready to render assistance.

The Australian War Minister requested the Allies for more men and planes to resist the intensification of Japanese submarine attacks against the Australian coast.

Reuter reports that Churchill, on the occasion of the Polish national holiday, sent a message to the Poles, in which reference is made to the re-establishment of a great and independent Poland.

Rear Admiral F.H. Pagram has been appointed First Sea Lord and Chief of Supply and Transportation. His predecessor, Rear Admiral Cunningham will shortly receive another appointment. Pagram's successor in an overseas command with the coastal forces will be Rear Admiral H.B. Rablings.

There are 450,000 negroes, among them 2,000 officers, in the U.S. Army, according to the "Chicago Tribune".

The relations between Japan and Portugal over the Timor issue have deteriorated.

On the Situation in Italy.

The German Armistice Commission in its weekly report covering the period of 11 to 16 Apr. gives an outline of political opinion in Italy. According to popular opinion a possible agreement with Russia was discussed between the Fuehrer and the Duce. In this way the Mediterranean area has finally been acknowledged by the Germans as the decisive theater of war, a fact which has so far not stood out quite clearly in the German viewpoint. A very careful policy towards France is being pursued on the part of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to overcome as far as possible the present tension in their relations. The Italian measures against guerrilla activity in the Balkans, however, leave much to be desired as regards consistency. (For details see 1/Skl 12102/43 Gkdos.)

The German Naval Attaché, Rome submits a remarkable report published by Italian newspapers, which the Attaché, after investigation, attributes to Admiral Riccardi. The article deals with Italo - German cooperation in connection with Grand Admiral Doenitz' visit to Italy.

The author opposes wrong interpretations of the agreements reached, and, according to the view of the attaché, reveals the reactions of the Italian Armed Forces. The honest comradeship and mutual respect between the Axis leaders is particularly stressed. (For details see 1/Skl 12359/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. So far no reports have been received on the renewed discussions between Field Marshal Kesselring and General Ambrosio regarding the employment of Italian destroyers in the Tunis supply traffic.

The Chief, Naval Staff, therefore, directs the following telegram to be dispatched immediately to General Ambrosio and Admiral Riccardi:

"Telegram to His Exc. General Ambrosio
and His Exc. Admiral Riccardi.

I ordered Vice Admiral Ruge to Berlin to make a report on 1 and 2 May. He gave an account of the question of supplies for Tunisia and reported the great difficulties of sea transport. I consider that the urgent necessity of holding Tunis, and, therefore, the flow of supplies in spite of the local superiority of the enemy at sea and above all in the air, requires the unrestricted use of all naval units irrespective of future operations. Therefore, I not only consider the employment of cruisers and Italian PT boats necessary for transport tasks, but also of destroyers. Even the smallest amount of supplies which reach Africa are of the greatest importance to the troops fighting in Tunisia."

(See 1/Skl 1316/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. The Chief, Foreign Affairs Section, Operations Division, Naval Staff reports that negotiations with the Spanish government regarding the rubber washed ashore have not yet brought any results. The purchaser appointed by the German side is said to have run out of foreign exchange.

III. The Administrative Staff of the Executive Office of the Commander in Chief, Navy brings up for discussion a request from Gauleiter Bohle that stronger emphasis be placed both in the press and over the radio on the achievements of German merchant shipping. Naval Staff agrees with the request, but must object to the publication of matters of an operational nature which have to be kept secret, as for instance the overseas blockade-running operations. The Chief, Naval Staff approves the request of Gauleiter Bohle, subject to this restriction.

IV. Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that the Danish regent has admonished his generals to be loyal towards the German Army.

Conference in a very Restricted Circle.

V. Mine Situation.

The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division has corrected his report of 30 Apr., according to which all front offices were informed about the experiences of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West with the new mine firing devices. The information was not issued until 30 Apr., up to which time defensive measures had still been in the experimental stage.

The Chief, Naval Staff states that this information should have been issued immediately by the responsible authority, i.e. the Naval Staff.

The Chiefs, Operations Division and Mine Warfare Section, Naval Staff report in this connection that this information had been omitted on the basis of considerations which proved incorrect. Naval Staff had wanted to wait and see first of all whether the new counter-measures proved effective.

In connection with the loss of the GNEISENAU the Chief, Naval Staff requests that the responsible quarters take delays into account rather than risk particularly important units.

The Chief, Mine Warfare Section, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports that as a result of the mines found near Rostock the type of mine has been recognized, and that in all theaters of war a double escort will have to be assigned to convoys.

Special Items.

I. The Air Force has decided to begin construction on long-range reconnaissance planes suitable for employment over the Atlantic. The most suitable plane is that designed by Prof. Tank, but which, however, will not go into serial production until 1946. Until then the types Ju 290, He 177, and Ju 390 are to be built as substitutes.

The construction of the Me 264 will be discontinued. An additional reconnaissance group under Air Commander, Atlantic Coast will be set up. (See 1/Skl 12859/43 Gkdos.)

So, in the fourth year of the war the first steps are being taken by the Air Force to provide effective support for submarine warfare by long-range reconnaissance over extended sea areas; a request of long years' standing made by the Navy is being met. The lack of a separate

naval air force comes drastically to the fore in the course of such development. Its presence would most probably have prevented the fact that in the greatest naval war of all times we have lacked one of the most important and most modern weapons, a naval air force, while the enemy possesses quite a formidable one.

II. Naval Staff conducted an investigation into the possibilities of using helicopters for combatting submarines and for the defense of coastal waters; it arrived at the conclusion that type FA 223 possesses good qualities. Following an examination of the operational possibilities, the quantities of helicopters asked for in the past are being reduced to the required amount and the responsible quarters informed thereof. (1/Skl 11697/43 Gkdos.)

III. The Bureau of Naval Armament, Torpedo Branch will be informed of the decision of Naval Staff, Operations Division, according to which the improved storage batteries of the G 7 e-torpedo may be made known to the Italian Navy. The exact time for the release of this information is being left to the discretion of the Torpedo Branch. (1/Skl I opa 1223/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submitted a treatise on the possible improvement of American-Russian communication via the Arctic. (1/Skl 12933 geh. in War Diary, Supplement "Material on the Enemy Situation".)

Situation 3 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

It is reported that non-Spanish planes are flying over the island of Grand Canaria every day.

A seaplane base for the war against submarines is in the course of completion at Casablanca. Large numbers of U.S. personnel have arrived for this purpose. Two convoys of seven large tankers each are said to have left Curacao at the beginning of April, their destination is likely to be North Africa.

The cruiser PRIMAUGUET was again detected on patrol duty north of the St. Paul Rock at the end of April.

Sixty seven ships are said to have been held up at Durban at the end of April because of the danger from submarines, according to a report from Lourenço Marques. The sailing of a troop convoy for Australia has been reported from Capetown. The convoys sailing from Capetown are being escorted by aircraft carriers.

2. Own Situation:

The Allies have sunk six blockade runners in the first three months of this year, according to British press reports. An examination of this figure shows the loss of the ship HOHENFRIEDBERG, RHAKOTIS, KARIN, IRENE, REGENSBURG, and DOGGERBANK.

The meteorologist aboard ship "28" who was left behind in Japan is to be brought back to Germany at a suitable opportunity by request of the Chief, Naval Meteorological Department. The Naval Attaché, Tokyo received relevant instructions in Radiogram 1335.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo submitted a suggestion with regard to the use of Italian transport submarines, and explained therein that such a plan would be most unprofitable. He suggests dispatching submarines with cargoes of rubber to meet the blockade runners and transhipment of these cargoes at sea. The Naval Attaché, Tokyo reported in the same communication that the establishment of an Italian base is unnecessary because of the carefully prepared German organization in the Southern area. In a reply to the Naval Attaché, Tokyo, Naval Staff stated that the employment of the Italian transport submarines is of decisive importance for the war, and that the uneconomic aspect will have to be accepted. Suggestions for transhipment at sea are rejected; they were thoroughly examined by the Naval Staff beforehand and rejected. The Attaché will be informed that the special conditions incidental to the equipment and loading of submarines would necessitate the employment of Italian expert personnel in the Japanese southern area (1/Skl 1259/43 Gkdos. Chefs.).

II. Situation West Area.

Twice in the course of the day our Air Force detected a southbound convoy about 250 miles west of Ortegal. A little farther to the west a convoy of 27 tank landing craft with three patrol vessels was sighted steering south.

1. Atlantic Coast:

Two ground mines were swept off La Pallice.

The 8th Destroyer Flotilla left for the Bay of Biscay during the night of 3 May for exercises.

2. Channel Area:

Operations of the PT Boat Flotillas and the 2nd Torpedo Boat Flotilla had to be postponed because of the weather conditions.

One ground mine was swept off Cherbourg.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance detected 25 steamers off Great Yarmouth steering southwest.

Enemy fighters attacked patrol boats north of Borkum in the evening of 3 May causing only slight casualties. In the afternoon, the 9th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was attacked by Lockhead planes; one plane was shot down.

Own Situation:

One ground mine was swept off Borkum and one off Ameland.

The escort duties in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out according to plan.

The convoy of the tanker TAIFUN started on its passage from Flushing to Weser-muende.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Weather reconnaissance over Bear Island, the Lofotens, and Jan Mayen was without any tactical results. A submarine of unidentified nationality was sighted between Iceland and Jan Mayen. Photographic reconnaissance of Scapa and Aberdeen had to be broken off because of the weather conditions.

Three Russian submarines were lying off the Arctic coast, according to the radio intelligence.

Moderate enemy air reconnaissance was observed over the North Sea and on the part of the Iceland squadrons.

A vessel which was located at an unknown range west of Stavanger transmitted three tactical radio messages to Scapa.

There was only slight artillery activity by the batteries on the Fisher peninsula on 1 May.

Two planes were shot down by escort vessels and one by fighters during the raid on a convoy south of Kiberg reported yesterday. Three Russians in a rubber dinghy were saved.

On 2 May, planes flew over the area of Honningsvaag, Banak, Bergen, and Sola.

Own Situation:

The Karm Sound was again opened for traffic of small independently sailing vessels and fishing smacks.

An explosion occurred on a minelaying vessel alongside the quay at Koppervik, presumably through sabotage. The boat is lying with her stern on the bottom.

Group North issued the keyword order for the start of the mine operation "Samuel" (see War Diary 27 Apr.).

The brief report on the transfer of the NUERNBERG submitted in Telegram 1906 does not contain any new details.

No escorts took place on the Arctic coast. Seventeen ships were escorted north and eight south.

Special Items:

I. The Group Command North/Fleet, in a message to Naval Station North Sea, Naval Station Baltic, and Naval Command Norway emphasizes the importance of informing Group North in good time of all plans which might have operational importance. (Skl Qu A II 1331/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

II. The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North has submitted the operational order for the laying of the barrage "14 a", the reinforcement of the West Wall (keyword: "Quersprung".).

The minelayers OSTMARK and BRUMMER, and ten other minelayers will take part in the operation, the torpedo boats JAGUAR, GREIF, and MOEVE serving as escorts. Threehundred and seventeen EMC's, 249 cutting floats, and 500 explosive floats will be planted.

The barrage is to be laid in the next new moon phase (1/Skl 1283/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

There was lively patrol traffic in Kronstadt Bay. Air reconnaissance sighted twelve merchant vessels off Lavansari. The Finns reported one submerging submarine six miles southwest of Hogland. Air raids were carried out on the coastal territory and our own vessels off Vigrund.

2. Own Situation:

Six ships and one submarine were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic.

The minelayer BRUMMER put in to Kristiansand South.

The transfer of the NUERNBERG was completed according to plan. The NUERNBERG dropped anchor in the Strande Bay on 3 May.

The destroyer dock from Wilhelmshaven entered Swinemuende in the forenoon of 3 May. The RICHARD BEITZEN is en route to Swinemuende. The torpedo boat T "24" entered Kiel.

The battery "Bismarck" fired on two enemy patrol boats which withdrew towards Seiskari under cover of a smoke-screen. Two old mines were swept off Hogland. One Russian LMZ mine was towed into shallow waters to be salvaged. Four coastal motor boats put in to Helsinki.

Special Items.

For the present the Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic suggests leaving open the gap between the barrages "1 a" and "2 a" for the passage of our own motor minesweepers, as it is situated within the range of the German batteries on Tyters. He plans to lay cutting and explosive floats in the "Seeigel" barrages. Naval Station Baltic has given its consent to this. (1/Skl 12777/43 Gkdos.)

3. Merchant Shipping:

I. The Naval Intelligence Division submits the results of an investigation into the shipping traffic from the U.S.A. to the Persian Gulf during the period January to March 1943. (See 1/Skl 12665/43 geh. in the Supplement "Foreign Merchant Shipping".)

II. Naval Staff calls the attention of Naval Station Baltic to the military importance of the ferry service Sassnitz - Traelleborg, and to the plan for directing the leave-traffic not via this ferry but via Denmark.

Naval Station Baltic is to suspend the ferry service for the present because of the danger from mines and new types of firing devices, and is to examine and report the possibility of an early resumption (Telegram 1701).

III. The Naval Attaché, Stockholm wires that the Swedish Navy concurs in the establishment of a connecting channel between the German mine-free channel "32" and the Swedish neutrality channel. The Swedish Navy will take over the sweeping of the Swedish part of the channel. Naval Station Baltic, Admiral Denmark, and the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic are being informed to that effect in 1/Skl 13242/43 geh.

V. Submarine Warfare.

The records on the submarine war in the War Diary of Naval Staff, Operations Division and the Diary of Naval Staff, Submarine Division have so far been partly duplicated. It has, therefore, been directed that the War Diary of Naval Staff, Submarine Division is to record in detail, as heretofore, the operational measures and the execution of the operations, whereas the War Diary of Naval Staff, Operations Division is to contain in bold outline only the enemy situation, the planning for, and considerations connected with the execution of operations. This will take force as from today.

A. Enemy Situation:

Gibraltar broadcast a submarine warning signal from the American tanker GULFDAWN (7,096 BRT) from DG 8347 which sighted a surfaced submarine. The submarine was the U "117" which was detected by the escort of the tanker, received depth charges, and then lost contact.

It has been reported from Las Palmas that for some time enemy planes have been flying over Gran Canaria nearly every day. These are probably reconnaissance flights from Agadir.

B. Operations:

Group "Specht" and "Star":

The northbound convoy (presumably SC) detected by a submarine was not found again yesterday. The groups were therefore drawn up in reconnaissance line across the assumed convoy route at 1800, and were to approach the convoy, course 205°, speed four knots. The enemy had not been found by this morning, so that it may be assumed that, conscious of having been detected by a boat, he has made such a pronounced detour that the group was by-passed. A penetration of the reconnaissance line is hardly likely, considering the close disposition of the boats.

If no contact is established in the course of the day, the groups, which still consist of twenty nine boats in all, will be detailed to intercept a westbound ON-convoy which is expected on the basis of dead-reckoning.

Group "Amsel":

This group was reinforced by five boats and divided into four smaller groups of five boats each for the purpose of camouflaging the disposition against enemy location. A concentration in one patrol boat line across the assumed convoy route is not planned until the convoy deadline is found by dead reckoning or by the radio intercept service.

On 7 or 8 May an HX convoy is expected in this area, according to data available.

Group "Drossel":

A southbound convoy was observed from the air off the Bay of Biscay at 0825 yesterday morning; Group "Drossel", as well as favorably placed boats leaving home waters were detailed to operate against it. The radio signals transmitted from the plane and picked up by the submarine gave a favorable enemy location. A submarine sighted the convoy towards 1430 and reported it to consist of six to ten steamers, course south. The Air Force later on observed an additional convoy consisting of 27 vessels in the same area. The subsequent photographic evaluation shows that landing craft of 250 t are involved here. The boats have therefore been ordered to take advantage of any chances of attack when intercepting this convoy, but to operate mainly against the first reported convoy. The reports from the boats received during the day show that they are constantly intercepting only the convoy with the landing craft, so that there is a possibility that in the case of the first reported convoy too, landing craft rather than ships are involved. An inquiry has been sent to the Air Commander, Atlantic Coast asking whether there are also photographic data available for this convoy. The operation continues. The chances of an attack on the landing craft are, however, extremely slight, considering the prevailing weather conditions.

For the present only two of the submarines on passage to the Cape area have been assigned to operational areas off Lourenco Marques, and one boat off Durban.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

British Isles and Vicinity:

One hundred and seventy five planes of the 3rd Air Force were on flights in the western area and eight planes in the Mediterranean.

Sixteen Do 217's fouled the convoy channel between the Thames estuary and Dover during the night of 3 May. Planes flew over the western area in large numbers during the day, but few attacks took place. One Spitfire and one Mosquito were shot down. Isolated reconnaissance planes flew over the Baltic area and the Rhenish - Westphalian industrial district.

No planes crossed into Reich territory.

Two courier planes flew to Sweden, one to England.

Mediterranean Theater:

The Tunisian front was given support by the operation of fighter-bombers and light bombers.

Eastern Front:

Forty three planes were shot down on 2 May, and three of our own failed to return to their base.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

An examination of the report on two convoys putting in to Gibraltar in the forenoon of 2 May showed that the majority of the ships came from the Mediterranean. Only a few light vessels put in and left in the morning of 3 May.

A minelaying cruiser of the ADVENTURE class coming from the Atlantic proceeded in the direction of the Mediterranean after a brief halt.

Tres Forcas sighted 17 landing craft in the afternoon of 2 May steering for the Mediterranean, presumably the same that left Gibraltar in the afternoon of 1 May.

Our own air reconnaissance showed the following results: 4 independently sailing vessels off Oran, course east; 3 destroyers north of Bone, course west; 2 unidentified ships off Pantelleria, course west. No enemy sightings in the sea area between Alexandria and Tobruk.

Four destroyers were between Bizerta and Sardinia in the evening, and an unidentified number of PT boats off Cape Bon in the evening of 2 May, according to an Italian report.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Two Italian submarines were in the operational area.

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South reports that no offensive operations of any size took place on the entire Tunisian front on 3 May. The newly occupied main line of defense is complete.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The war transport KT "11" left Tunis for Reggio in the evening of 2 May and called at Marsala as an interim port on 3 May.

One German naval landing craft, five Siebel ferries, and five infantry landing craft have been en route from Marsala to Tunis since the forenoon of 3 May.

4. Special Items:

I. (Canceled. Tr.N.).

II. A summary of the losses which occurred off the southeastern tip of Sardinia shows the sinking of eleven ships totalling 17,000 BRT and the beaching of one ship of 2,000 BRT. All vessels were sunk by submarines.

III. The German Special Staff requests a decision on the question of whether the six auxiliary minesweepers are to be handed over to the Commanding Admiral, Aegean Sea. Four boats are at present under repair and two in Spezia for the purpose of controling the submarine approach channels.

5. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The BARLETTA is to return to Piraeus for Marimorea upon completion of the present operations, according to instructions from the Italian Admiralty.

Convoy traffic was carried out according to plan.

Black Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance did not observe any traffic between Temriuk and the Don estuary. In Ochemchiri: 5 submarines, 3 motor minesweepers, 2 freighters, 1 floating derrick, 4 coastal vessels. In Tuapse: 12 motor minesweepers, 9 PT boats, 10 small vessels, 1 floating derrick. In Gelenjik: 8 motor minesweepers, 13 PT boats, 7 coastal vessels, 1 beached freighter. At the landing place: 1 damaged freighter, 2 coastal vessels.

2. Own Situation:

Two PT boats fired at close range on two Russian PT boats near the south Taman coast on the night of 2 May. The enemy boats withdrew westwards. The PT boats did not sight any additional enemy vessels as far as Takyl.

Italian PT boats off Cape Idokopas and Feodosia did not sight anything.

The following vessels were dispatched on operations in the evening of 3 May: 3 PT boats in the sea area off Gelenjik, 2 motor minesweepers off Anapa, and 5 boats of the Coastal Defense Flotilla, Asov Sea on the north coast of the Taman peninsula.

One harbor defense boat was burnt out during an air raid on Yalta in the forenoon of 3 May, otherwise only slight damage resulted.

The Anapa, Kerch, and Temriuk transports were carried out according to plan, as was the steamer traffic in the western part of the Black Sea.

One mine was swept by magnetic minesweeping planes north of the Kerch Strait.

Special Items.

I. The Commanding Admiral, Black Sea in a detailed report depicts the inadequacy of the anti-aircraft defense of Sevastopol, and requests its early reinforcement. The request is supported by Group South. (Telegram 1400). Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division will take the necessary action.

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch has issued an order to all offices concerned to clear up the question of command with regard to Navy Shore Offices on the Black Sea, since certain changes in organization have taken place there. (Copy as per 1/Skl 12973/43 Gkdos. Part C, Vol. XIV.)

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Finland:

On 14 Apr. a discussion took place in the Fuehrer Headquarters between the Finnish Lt. Gen. Talvala and the Chief of the Armed Forces, Operations Staff, during which questions affecting joint operations were dealt with (Naval Attaché 1112/43 Gkdos.).

The German Naval Attaché at Helsinki reports that the leaders of the Finnish State wished to avoid all acts of war which could be interpreted as being acts of aggression and which could deprive Finnish warfare of its purely defensive character. It is for this reason that the Finns are opposed to the German plan of launching air raids on Leningrad from Finnish air fields. (1/Skl 13414/43 geh.)

The British Admiralty announced the loss of the submarine TURBULENT.

The Chief of the U.S. War Production Board states that production has reached its peak capacity and can not be further increased. The peak is determined by the amount of steel available.

"The Times" writes that British attempts at an offensive in Burma have been disappointing. After a few initial successes the British are now on the defensive.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports on a radio message from the Chief of the German Naval Command, Tunisia on the employment of submarines for transport of fuel to Tunis. (1/Skl 12836/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

The Commander in Chief, Navy has decided on the following immediate measures:

a. Two German submarines are to be withdrawn immediately from operations by the Commander, Submarines, Italy and are to proceed to Italy at full speed for refueling; the next German submarine ready at the shipyard is to be used as the third boat for the same task.

b. Vice Admiral Ruge is to ask the Italian Admiralty to supply additional submarines for supply purposes.

A conversion of German boats for gasoline transport is out of the question because of the time it would require.

This operation must be attempted despite the difficulties to be faced (low capacity, necessity of mine escort, danger from the air) and the disadvantages (losses, considering the already low number of combat submarines in the Mediterranean), so that everything possible is done to assist the troops who are holding Tunis and who lack nothing but supplies.

The relevant orders have been issued via Commanding Admiral, Submarines. (Copy as per 1/Skl I u 12996/43 and 12997/43, 12998/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that the naval artillery lighters in Sevastopol will be ready for operations at the end of the week.

The Siebel ferries will be taken over by the Air Force in the course of the next four weeks.

Group West has requested the appointment of a senior naval commander for Greater Paris. The Chief, Naval Staff rejects this request and directs that the tasks be taken over by a competent officer without a special appointment or a new staff.

III. Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff: Laval has issued orders to Admiral Robert not to let the ships in Martinique fall into the hands of the enemy; if necessary the ships are to be scuttled.

A new type of convoy has been identified; it consists of landing ships and landing boats. Three convoys of this type have been identified so far.

Conference in a very Restricted Circle:

IV. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports the suggestion, made by Commander, Destroyers that the French torpedo boats lying in Toulon should be incorporated in the destroyer flotillas.

As for the present the boats are carrying out escort tasks only, the Chief, Naval Staff has decided that the boats will remain under the command of the 4th Escort Flotilla. The advisability of a transfer to Commander, Destroyers can be examined later (see Telegram 0030).

V. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division suggests that the torpedo boats GREIF and JAGUAR now be transferred to the western area. The MOEVE is not needed at the Torpedo School. The Chief, Naval Staff has given his consent for the MOEVE to be also transferred to the western area.

VI. The Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff submitted Admiral Nomura's request for a written statement concerning plans of the Chief, Naval Staff regarding German submarine operations in the Arabian Sea. The Chief, Naval Staff has directed this draft to be submitted.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch informs the Air Force that the ship "14" is being made available as night fighter directing ship (1/Skl 12820/43 Gkdos.)

II. New types of mine firing devices.

a. The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West and the Mining and Barrage Experimental Command entered into an exchange of opinions on the expediency of the measures decreed by the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West for submarine escort against the new firing devices. As a result the Commanding Admiral does not consider any alteration in the present arrangement necessary. (1/Skl 12243/43 Gkdos.)

b. The Mining and Barrage Experimental Command informs all quarters concerned that the mine-exploding vessels must, as a matter of principle, carry noise boxes (producing turbine noises) or noise boxes (large), as they would otherwise be 100 % endangered by the new British combination mine. (Telegram 1730.)

c. The Naval Staff informed all offices concerned about the new mine firing device on 3 May. An order has been issued to use magnetic and acoustic minesweeping gear combined as countermeasure. Increased security is to be provided for submarines and valuable vessels, taking into account the delays incurred thereby. (For details see 1/Skl 12869/43 Gkdos.)

Preliminary information on the new firing device was issued in 1/Skl 12594/43 Gkdos. on 30 Apr., in which special defensive measures for submarines were set forth.

Arrangements are being made to procure a considerably increased number of noise boxes, because as a result of the combined firing device it is necessary for all magnetic minesweepers to carry noise boxes as well.

III. The Armed Forces High Command dispatched the records of a discussion which took place between Admiral Nomura and the Chief, Armed Forces, Operations Staff at the Fuehrer Headquarters on 18 Apr. At this discussion all essential issues pertaining to the war in Europe were dealt with. (See 1/Skl 1263/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.)

IV. Naval Staff informs the Naval Inspector of the Air Force of a plan to make a flight to the weather station "Holzauge" in Greenland. (See War Diary, Part A, 29 Apr.). The Air Force has been requested to examine the possibility of using a BV 138 for this purpose. (1/Skl 1288/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

V. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division has submitted a report based on recent fresh information concerning Anglo-American landing craft and landing ships (1/Skl 13441/43 geh. in the volume "Foreign Navies".)

Situation 4 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

All ships in Foreign Waters have been informed concerning the patrol area of the cruiser PRIMAUGUET north of St. Paul and the employment of ships of the QUEEN MARY and MAURETANIA class in South African convoys. (See Radiogram 2315)

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

The Air Commander, Atlantic Coast reported at 1720 on 4 May 27 landing craft and 23 patrol boats 200 miles west of Porto, course south. No attack was possible for lack of forces.

Forty two planes were detected in the northwestern part of the Bay of Biscay.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast Area:

Exercises by the 8th Destroyer Flotilla have so far been carried out to schedule.

One ground mine was cleared off La Pallice.

Our own Air Force attacked an enemy steamer in BE 42 on the afternoon of 4 May.

Channel Area:

Operation by the 2nd Torpedo Boat Flotilla could not be carried out because of the weather conditions.

Special Items.

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West submitted an order as to how the present anti-mine escort for submarines is to be carried out against the new firing devices. (See Telegram 0110.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Three ground mines were swept off the Frisian Islands.

The German ore-steamer EGIER (4,500 BRT) struck a mine and sank north of Juist.

The escort of the tanker TAIFUN is on its outward passage according to plan.

The gunboat K "4" with two minelayers is on her return passage from the Hook to the Elbe.

The 9th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was assigned to carry out a check-sweep near Channel Red.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Photographic reconnaissance of the Seydisfjord (Iceland) showed one tanker of 8,000 BRT, one freighter of 6,000 BRT, one freighter of 2,500 BRT, and one patrol boat. A destroyer was sighted ninety miles northwest of the Faeroes. Three merchant vessels, course south, were detected 130 miles south of Jan Mayen (inaccurate transmission of the position).

The air activity over the North Sea was lively: four planes of the Iceland squadrons were detected on operations.

Russian air reconnaissance reported our own merchant vessels off Harbaken. This report was passed on to Russian submarines.

Planes flew over the territory near Honningsvaag and Banak. A convoy was unsuccessfully attacked with aerial torpedoes off Froesjoen.

Own Situation:

The battery Petsamo fired ten salvoes on the battery on the Ribachi peninsula on 2 May.

The search carried out in the area around the island of Hooden by PT boats and minesweepers was without result.

Twenty eight ships were escorted north and twenty ships south.

Special Items.

Naval Staff informs Groups North and West and the Commander, Destroyers that, following the execution of the mining operations planned, the torpedo boats JAGUAR, GREIF, and MOEVE are to be transferred to the western area as soon as possible, and placed at the disposal of Group West.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Slight patrol boat traffic was observed off Lavansari. A bombing and machine-gunning attack was carried out on our minesweeping formations off Little Tyters.

2. Own Situation:

In the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic nine vessels were escorted; one magnetic minesweeping plane was assigned to patrol the channels.

Mines were swept off Swinemuende, Helsingoer, and in Kjoege Bay.

The 100 per cent clearing sweep was started in the sea area off Windau. The minefield "16 d" was laid according to plan.

A navigable channel through the ice to Lulea has been reported in the Bothnian Sea. Shipping can be resumed with steamers reinforced against ice.

Special Items.

1. In connection with the loss of the steamer GNEISENAU, Naval Station Baltic submits a report on minelaying and suspected mines observed in the central part of the Baltic Sea, and reports that from 28 Apr. up to the time of the accident to the GNEISENAU the following vessels had passed the place of the accident:

One hundred ninety nine merchant vessels without escort, one tanker, one destroyer, one submarine, and one floating derrick under escort. The accident to the GNEISENAU has been described in a brief report.

Naval Station Baltic considers it is out of the question that a combined aerial mine was the cause, rather it is likely to have been a very dull ELM/J fitted with a delayed action device. (See Telegram 1010.)

2. In view of the increased difficulties incidental to mines, Naval Station Baltic has issued an order for anti-mine escort of important units. (See Telegram 1017.)

V. Merchant Shipping.

The Naval Staff has replied to the Reich Ministry of Transportation's request for defensive equipment for the ferry-ships DEUTSCHLAND and PREUSSEN to the effect that it will provide defense in accordance with available means, and requests information as to when the ferry-ships will sail. (See 1/Skl II 12687/43 geh.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

The enemy carried out submarine patrol from the Azores.

It can be seen from an agent's report that the American Clippers on their flights from the U.S.A. to Lisbon have not only been arriving at the Azores very irregularly for weeks past, but they also have to carry out repairs there unusually often. Subsequent "test flights" are then carried out, leaving the passengers on the ground, and extending mostly over a period of several hours. In the course of the flight to Lisbon large loops are being flown. It must be concluded from these facts that these Clippers are being sent off from the Azores on submarine patrol, and that this is being camouflaged as repair flights.

The transport EMPRESS OF SCOTLAND (26,032 BRT) together with an unidentified unit put in to Casablanca on 23 Apr.

2. Operations:

Groups "Specht" and "Star" have been combined to form the new Group "Fink", consisting of 27 boats. One boat intercepted a southwest-bound convoy south of Greenland. The partial Groups "Amsel I" and "Amsel II" as well as Group "Fink", 39 boats in all, were detailed to operate against this convoy. Eleven boats established contact in the course of the evening and during the night. The weather was favorable, moderate winds and good visibility.

Five ships totalling 29,000 BRT were sunk and an additional ship of 4,000 BRT was torpedoed. No information on the strength of the defense has been received so far. Air escort was detected by a shore-based plane for the first time last night. The operation continues.

Groups "Amsel III" and "Amsel IV" were set up in new patrol lines in the western North Atlantic.

One boat of Group "Drossel" established contact with the landing craft convoy during the night of 3 May, and reported the latter to be sailing in very loose formation. Because of the seaway there were no chances for the boat to register any hits on the shallow riding boats. The convoy of six to ten ships first reported on the preceding day was not intercepted again during a renewed search by reconnaissance planes, so that the assumption is confirmed that this convoy, too, consists of landing craft. As a result the operation was broken off last night, and Group "Drossel" was set up as from 0800 on 5 May in a patrol line with which it is expected to contact two northbound convoys which have been reported by a fairly reliable source. Air reconnaissance with light forces will be carried out in this area on 5 May.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Seventy nine of our bombers raided Norwich during the night. Because of the lack of adequate navigational procedure only slight effects may be expected from the raid. Very heavy night fighter activity and only slight anti-aircraft defense were encountered, as the approach partly coincided with British formations returning from missions. Five of our planes failed to return.

Incursion activity into occupied western territories by day was of medium strength. Towards noon a surprise raid was carried out by three Mosquitoes on the electric power plant at the Hague. The boiler-house was severely damaged.

A raid by fifty Fortresses on Antwerp took place. No detailed reports as yet.

Strong formations flew in from the west during the night of 4 May attacking the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial district with Dortmund as the focal point. Fifteen planes flew in from the east. Fourteen planes were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery and ten by fighters, according to reports so far received.

Seven courier planes flew to Sweden.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Fighter-bombers were on operations in the northern sector of the front. A portion of the heavy bomber formations had to be employed on escort duties. Fighter-bombers were used for supply flights.

Four enemy planes were shot down.

For photographic reconnaissance see Mediterranean.

3. Eastern Front:

Fifty eight planes were shot down on 3 May; two of our own planes failed to return. The fouling of the Volga was continued during the nights of 2 and 3 May.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

Two transports presumably in ballast left Gibraltar heading for the Atlantic on the afternoon of 3 May. A small convoy left Gibraltar in the direction of the Atlantic at noon on 4 May.

Shipping in the western Mediterranean was brisker than usual according to air reconnaissance.

In the forenoon: off Oran 11 transports, 2 patrol boats, and a group of 3 landing craft transports.

At noon: 1 freighter and 1 patrol boat off Oran.

In the afternoon: 11 tank landing craft off Oran.

The Air Force sighted two unidentified vessels, presumably destroyers north of Bizerta in the small hours of the morning of 4 May.

Three destroyers were sighted off Monastir in the afternoon, and two destroyers between Bizerta and Sardinia in the evening. During the night three destroyers were continuously reported in different positions in the triangle formed by the southeastern tip of Sardinia, western tip of Sicily, and Bizerta.

Four PT boats were attacked by our fighter-bombers north of Tabarca. One PT boat was damaged.

Photographic reconnaissance of Port Said showed the following vessels at noon on 3 May: 1 Greek battleship, 2 destroyers, 1 escort vessel, 2 submarines, 8 small war vessels, 1 passenger steamer of 5,000 BRT, 25 freighters, 2 tankers, and 2 freighters outside the harbor.

Submarines were detected off Corfu, Palermo, and Cape Milazzo on 4 May.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Two Italian submarines were in the operational area. Two of our own submarines were withdrawn from the operations, in order to be used for the fuel supply service to Tunis.

Two PT boats transferred from Augusta to Empedocle. The transfer of the Italian minesweeping forces from Bizerta to Sicily was postponed for 24 hours.

An air raid on Reggio did not inflict any special damage. One plane was shot down. A bombing raid on Bizerta did not cause any damage. Fighter bombers attacked the radar station at Kelibia. The hospital ship VIRGILIO in the Bay of Tunis reported in an SOS an air attack in the evening of 4 May.

The ground situation on 4 May was as follows, according to the report of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South:

The enemy kept close on the heels of our own rearguards in the northern sector, and attacked in the sector held by the German Africa Corps following a one-hour's barrage. It was possible to bring his attack to a halt on the flanks. A local breach was made in the center. The sector occupied by the 164th Division was bombarded for two hours, without an attack following.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The steamer BELLUNO (4,279 BRT) put in to Tunis on the morning of 4 May. There is an additional report on the loss of the CAMPO BASSO and the torpedo boat PERSEO to the effect that the convoy was observed by enemy air reconnaissance during the night of 2 May, and was afterwards probably annihilated by destroyers. The signal station at Cape Bon observed gunfire and explosions southeast of the cape.

Five Italian naval landing craft reached Tunis at noon on 4 May, 2 additional naval landing craft are still expected. Five Siebel ferries, 5 infantry landing craft, and 1 German naval landing craft put in to Tunis early on 4 May. Six Siebel ferries, 4 infantry landing craft, and 1 German naval landing craft are en route from Marsala to Tunis. War transport KT "11" arrived at Reggio from Tunis on 4 May.

Special Items.

I. The Chief, German Naval Command, Italy reports that he handed over the telegram from the Chief, Naval Staff to the deputies for General Ambrosio and General Rossi, and for Admiral Riccardi. Both these gentlemen emphatically declare that the Italian Navy had in every respect made the greatest sacrifices so far, and that the remaining part of the Fleet would be necessary to counter an attack on the islands and the mainland. It is expected the Duce will make a decision on the further commitment of naval forces for Tunis. (1/Skl 1328/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. The Operations Staff was informed by Naval Staff that Admiral Ruge's endeavours to influence Admiral Riccardi on the subject of employing cruisers in the Tunis supply service failed to bring any result, and that a teletype message from the Commander in Chief, Navy on this matter addressed to General Ambrosio and Admiral Riccardi had been handed over by the Chief, German Naval Command, Italy. (1/Skl 12960/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

An Italian sailing vessel was sunk by an enemy submarine 45 miles southeast of Naxos.

It has been learned from Turkish sources that Great Britain turned over 3 new destroyers, 1 submarine, and 1 corvette to the Greek Navy. There was a ceremonial hand-over in Alexandria in the presence of the king.

2. Own Situation:

Two suspicious sailing vessels were captured off Milos.

The special operation under direction of the Naval Shore Commander, Attica is running according to plan. One Italian destroyer is on her return passage to Piraeus. The sea area off Cerigo was searched for watching mines by planes without result.

The convoy traffic was carried out to schedule.

Group South reports that nothing is known to the Air Force Area Command, Southeast of the recently reported incursion of enemy planes into the district of Nish. The matter is being investigated.

Black Sea:

1. Enemy Situation:

Bulgarian fishermen reported the sighting of an enemy submarine east of Burgas on 2 May.

There was small ship traffic off Gelenjik and Sochi on the night of 4 May, according to air reconnaissance.

Constanta was attacked three times from the air on 3 May. Damage to buildings was inflicted. One plane was shot down. An air raid on Anapa was carried out on the same day. One plane was shot down by naval anti-aircraft guns. Feodosia was raided twice on 4 May, causing damage to buildings.

2. Own Situation:

PT boats and motor minesweepers operating on the night of 3 May fought a short action without successes or losses. Two Italian PT boats are to operate against enemy supplies off Gelenjik on the night of 4 May, two additional Italian PT boats are to operate on anti-submarine patrol off Feodosia. Commencing 5 May naval landing craft and boats of the Coastal Defense Flotilla are to carry out coastal patrol duties every night north of the Kuban estuary.

The submarine U "19" put in to Constanta on 4 May after enemy patrol, and reports only one triple torpedo spread on a destroyer which missed its mark.

A lighter struck a mine and sank in the southern exit to the Kerch Strait. One magnetic minesweeping plane sank following an emergency landing near the Kerch Strait.

Special Items.

Following the transfer of the Naval Shore Command, Caucasia to Kerch and the taking over of the ferry tasks, Rear Admiral Scheurlen has been reported by Group South as being available for other duty.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

In the course of negotiations on shipment of arms from Germany to Spain, the Spanish General, Martinez Campos, was informed of the German wish to enter into discussions on military questions other than those related to shipment of arms. In speaking to the German Military Attaché, Madrid, the Spanish General stated that he had gained the impression in Germany that little value is placed on the establishment of a contact between the General Staffs. If such discussions should be desired after all, this question would have to be dealt with through diplomatic channels.

> Obviously the German wish did not strike the desired chord of response in Madrid. The general's statement reveals a careful withdrawal on the part of the Spaniards from the German plan. Nevertheless, the Armed Forces High Command requested the German Foreign Office to approach the Spanish Foreign Office in a suitable form through diplomatic channels. (3/Skl 1624 and 1637/43.)

The Swedish Navy announces that the place where the ULVEN sank has now been accurately established. It is situated in the German minefield outside Swedish territorial waters.

In the last note which Giraud addressed to de Gaulle it was noticeable that they had come nearer in outlook. A meeting is to take place in Morocco within the next two weeks.

Italo-Spanish economic negotiations are at present in progress at Nice, and are designed to remove the difficulties in economic relations. They are predominently concerned with Spanish price policy.

Admiral Robert protested against the cancelation of the agreements with the U.S.A. Hull declared Robert's attitude "unintelligible".

In a speech on the political situation, the Swedish Minister without portfolio, Domoe, called for Sweden to concentrate on an unanimous policy of neutrality, an increase in defense, and a constructive policy of supplies for their country.

On the Polish - Russian controversy:

Eden stated in the House of Commons that he is confident the differences between Russia and Poland could be settled.

In a speech over the radio, Sikorski addressed himself to the USSR expressing the hope that tens of thousands of Polish citizens may be permitted to leave Soviet Russia as soon as possible.

The difficulties which separate the two states would have to be removed as soon as possible. However, there existed limits beyond which the Polish nation would not yield.

The British Ambassador in Moscow informed Molotov of the standpoint of the British Government with regard to the conflict with the Poles.

Fifty new U.S. anti-submarine vessels were turned over to the British Fleet, according to "Exchange Telegraph".

A press report from New York makes reference to a shortage of aviation gasoline, which is said to be impairing the training of pilots.

The U.S.A. has reached the production peak for naval aircraft and ships, Knox stated. Labor and material are beginning to be in short supply.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that the Air Force has requested an increase of its transport quotas in Norway for the construction of airfields. In this way the question is raised as to which order of priority is to be accorded to the work projects in Norway - batteries, naval bases, airfields, railways. The Armed Forces High Command has not yet come to a decision despite pressure from the various quarters concerned. The Reich Commissioner for Shipping is responsible for the transport space; it is impossible for the Navy to make more escort vessels available. The Shipping and Transport Branch has been ordered to follow up the matter.

Minister Speer has orders to build a bridge near Kerch. As escort vessels are very scarce there, Speer plans to transfer the FT boats lying in Travemuende to the Black Sea, and to place them at the disposal of the Navy. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division has been ordered to investigate to what extent the boats can be used.

II. The Chief, Bureau of Naval Armament has submitted a draft for a Fuehrer order for increased construction of submarines and light naval forces, which is to be counter-signed by Speer. The Chief, Naval Staff requests that it be worded in still more concrete fashion.

III. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that the Italians have expressed the wish for a gradual repatriation of Italian labor from Germany.

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Conference in a very Restricted Circle:

IV. The Chief of International Law and Prizes Section, Naval Staff, Operations Division, Ministerialrat Eckardt, reports on the situation with regard to the shackling of prisoners of war. (1/Skl I i 13704/43 geh.)

The Chief, Naval Staff views the whole affair as a political matter. Seen from the military point of view the last reply from Great Britain on this matter must be considered quite satisfactory. The Chief, Naval Staff wishes to interpose only if it is learned that captured members of submarine crews are put into shackles. (Tr. N.: a penciled marginal remark by the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff reads: "This also includes of course, other members of the Navy".) When an occasion arises the Chief, Naval Staff plans to inquire of the Operations Staff the exact state of the affair.

V. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports on a telegram from the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South expressing his gratitude to the Chief, Naval Staff for the planned employment of submarines as fuel transports. However the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South considers the submarines will be so endangered in the Straits of Sicily and the transport capacity so slight, that he asks for the plan to be dropped. On the other hand he considers the employment of special transport submarines as very desirable.

The Chief, Naval Staff is determined not to let down the fighting forces in Tunisia in any way, and has replied as follows to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, with copies to German Naval Command Italy, German Special Staff, and the Commander, Submarines, Italy:

"A: I have decided to employ submarines as fuel transports, because to my knowledge the fuel situation in Tunisia is at present critical, and because even small quantities might be of decisive importance to the fighting forces. In full realization of these facts, the loss of supply ships appears to me at present to be of secondary importance considering the enemy has completed the massing of troops on the Tunisian front. Because of the unusual situation, which demands immediate action and which in this exceptional case justifies the employment of submarines for transport purposes, I have the following plan, for the execution of which the orders have been issued:

1. The transfer to the Mediterranean of two extra boats which are at present forcing their way through the Straits of Gibraltar.

2. The operation of three submarines to begin with, which will transport the fuel in cans, for which no conversion is necessary.

3. The fitting of three additional submarines for the transport of gasoline in fuel oil bunkers.

4. Following the completion of the boats mentioned under 3., the boats under 2. will return to normal operations.

B. I do not underestimate the serious threat to the submarines in the Straits of Sicily and the need for making special arrangements as regards our own anti-submarine- and air patrol. In the interests of holding Tunisia, however, I consider myself bound to operate the submarines, and can only cancel this operation if you regard the gasoline situation in Tunisia as being not so decisive. I request your view on this matter."

S/Doenitz, Grand Admiral.

(1/Skl 1327/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV).

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South subsequently repeated his appreciation and welcomes the operation of the boats (1/Skl 1349/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

VI. The 3rd Air Force reported that it is being forced to reduce its operational tasks considerably because of the severe fuel restrictions. Long-range reconnaissance will be affected most. (1/Skl 1308/43 Gkdos. Chefs. War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a).

VII. Admiral, Northern Waters submitted his comments on the withdrawal of submarines from Northern Waters. Considering the number of boats remaining, successful reconnaissance will be possible only within the set-up off Bear Island. Group North likewise expressed an opinion on this matter.

The Chief, Naval Staff considers a mobile reconnaissance flanked by the ice limit as the only measure holding promise of success in view of the small number of submarines. (1/Skl 1308/43 Gkdos. Chefs. War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

VIII. The Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff learned from personal information that the new Air Force acoustic mine firing device is ready for operation. On the other hand, while the type of firing device with the pressure - tight cablebox, which is already being used by the Navy, is known to the Air Force, no fitting has taken place as yet. The attention of the Air Force has once more been drawn to the reservation with which the Navy treats the use of this new firing device.

Special Items.

I. A conference took place at Group West on the question of the use of the new mine firing device. As a result it has been found that the prerequisites for large-scale employment are at present lacking both because the forces are not available and because of the short nights.

The Group suggests postponement of the operation until August. (1/Skl 1272/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

The matter was discussed by the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff personally with the Chief, Air Force, General Staff on 1 May. The Air Force, General Staff is going to investigate the matter thoroughly. Operation in the Suez Canal is out of the question because there the mines could easily fall into enemy hands. The latter must be avoided at all costs, as it is comparatively easy to apply counter-measures once the firing device has become known.

II. Commander Sestini submitted in writing the contents of the report he gave on 1 May during a discussion between the Chief, Naval Staff and Vice Admiral Ruge. (1/Skl I a 13178/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIII.)

III. The Naval Intelligence Division submitted its Enemy Situation Report No. 9/43. It is to be emphasized as a special characteristic of the present situation that a massed transfer to the western Mediterranean of special long range transports began at the end of April. The volume of transport has been more than doubled.

There has been a quickening in the pace of convoy traffic to Britain, which points to a constant increase in the stock of supplies in Great Britain.

Victory ships, presumably improved and faster Liberty ships, are for the first time mentioned in the U.S. construction program. (1/Skl 13110/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Supplement "Enemy Situation Report".)

IV. The situation in the southeast necessitates an accelerated transfer of ten armed fishing vessels. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch has informed the offices concerned of the planned withdrawal of ten armed fishing vessels which were assigned to Naval Station Baltic (1/Skl 13050/43 Gkdos.).

Situation 5 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

The U.S. cruiser INDIANAPOLIS, a British cruiser, and several destroyers and corvettes formed part of the escort of a convoy passing Capetown at the end of March. Only a few troop transports have been reported from South African ports. No further troop embarkations for the Mediterranean are said to have taken place in South Africa since the end of March. The convoy route to the Indian Ocean is said to run east of Madagascar past Réunion and Mauritius. In the last week of April a U.S. "Fleet" - presumably a warship

formation is meant - is said to have left Capetown bound for New Zealand.

2. Own Situation:

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo requests data concerning the appearance, size, and speed of the ALSTERUFER, and the name of her captain.

Naval Staff has informed the Naval Attaché, Tokyo that the date of arrival of the OSORNO in Batavia should be changed to read 12 May.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

In the afternoon of 5 May our air reconnaissance sighted a cruiser of the FIJI class and three destroyers, course south, about 310 miles northwest of Lisbon, and three tank landing craft, course south, 180 miles northwest of Lisbon.

Several groups of vessels were sighted off Falmouth comprising in all 15 freighters, 2 patrol boats, and 3 torpedo boats.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

One harbor defense boat was attacked from the air in the afternoon of 5 May, resulting in slight damage.

In the Channel area PT boats attacked our minesweepers off Les Sept Iles during the night of 5 May; one PT boat was sunk, three others were seriously damaged.

The 5th PT Boat Flotilla and the 2nd Torpedo Boat Flotilla carried out their mining tasks according to plan. Three harbor defense boats were attacked off Le Havre early in the morning.

The 2nd, 4th and 6th PT Boat Flotillas were transferred to Guernsey.

III. North Sea, Norway, and Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Patrol boats were fired on with tracer shells off Ijmuiden during the night, but did not establish contact with the enemy.

Three mines were swept in convoy channels.

The tanker TAIFUN was transferred from Flushing to Wesermuende without incident.

The escort duties and sweeping of channels in the region of Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out as planned.

In the course of an air raid on Antwerp in the afternoon of 4 May no military, but only damage to the war economy resulted.

The naval anti-aircraft artillery Vlieland shot down three planes in the night of 4 May.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Meteorological reconnaissance over the Lofotens, Bear Island, and Jan Mayen was without tactical results. Three merchant vessels were sighted off the Faeroes.

Enemy reconnaissance over the North Sea was very lively. Ten planes of the Iceland squadrons were on operations.

Two planes attacked a convoy off Obrestad in the afternoon of 4 May. Both planes were shot down by fighters. The anti-aircraft battery "Vara" shot down one plane near Kristiansand South.

Own Situation:

The mining operation "Samuel" was carried out without incident and unobserved by the enemy. (See Telegram 1001.)

Seventeen ships were escorted north and 13 south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Lively patrol boat traffic comprising up to twelve boats was observed in Kronstadt Bay. Two large ships, among them presumably 1 destroyer, and 2 PT boats were reported southeast of Kronstadt.

Seven patrol boats, 6 large vessels, 12 motor minesweepers, and 1 submarine were made out in the harbor of Lavansaari.

2. Own Situation:

Two coastal motor boats and equipment were destroyed in the course of a sabotage fire in a Copenhagen shipyard.

Nine steamers were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic; 7 vessels and 1 magnetic minesweeping plane were on operations sweeping the channels.

Two mines were swept off Seelandsrev.

The salvaging of the wreck GNEISENAU will probably not be possible. One submarine hit a mine and was damaged off Sassnitz; the boat entered Swinemuende under her own power. The Air Force station Stolp - Reitz availed itself of the steamer REGIERUNGSRAT ANDERSEN for attempts at salvaging a crashed enemy plane; the steamer was lost when three or four ground mines exploded. A dredger was damaged. The naval shore commander had not been informed of the operation.

One mine and 28 explosive floats were swept from the barrage "Warthburg 3". Sweeping operations off Windau had to be canceled because of the weather conditions. The Finns report an enemy minefield six miles north of Hogland; sweeping operations have started.

The first troop transport to Jacobstadt has left Reval.

Special Items.

I. With regard to the loss of the GNEISENAU Naval Station Baltic reports in Telegram 0947 the views of the Naval Shore Commander West on the execution of the convoy GNEISENAU.

II. In reply to an inquiry regarding the permission to fish during darkness east of 27° East, the Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic reports that the order forbidding fishing must remain in force. (See Telegram 1811.)

V. Merchant Shipping.

1. Naval Staff draws the attention of the Reich Commissioner for Shipping to the fact that because of the intensification in the naval war situation, the transfer of the Rotterdam traffic to the German North Sea ports has repeatedly been requested, and that now the enemy situation has become so acute that efforts must be made to stop this traffic because of the demands

placed on the escort vessels by other war tasks. Naval Staff believes it can protect the remaining North Sea traffic as far as the River Ems. The Reich Commissioner for Shipping has been informed that the Naval Commander concerned is authorized to decide whether unprotected or poorly protected ships shall be retained or re-routed, but that he is to contact the Reich Commissioner for Shipping in making such a decision. The same information has also been passed on to Naval Station North and the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North. (1/Skl II 13099/43 Gkdos.)

2. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submitted fresh information gained from captured material on the shipping conditions in the waters around Great Britain as on 28 Feb. 1943. (1/Skl 13270/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Enclosure Volume "Waters around Great Britain".)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

A. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

B. Operations:

(Tr.N.: A penciled remark made by the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff preceding this paragraph reads as follows:

"The details following represent without exception matters that should be included in the War Diary of the Submarine Division rather than in this War Diary. Please take this fact into account in future.")

1. Atlantic:

Group "Fink":

The weather conditions in the area of operations were favorable during the day. Southerly winds prevailed, windforce 2 to 4, visibility 15 miles. The weather got very much worse towards evening and in the course of the night. Visibility especially decreased at a very fast rate, and was only 1 to 2 miles toward 0200; strong rain squalls from time to time.

Shadowing reports were received continuously from several boats during the day. On an average there were two boats shadowing the convoy. As a result of the report seven boats established contact in the course of the day, and 15 boats by 2300. The convoy appears to have split up into several parts, according to the reports. One boat reported at 2230 that, as far as it could make out, it had intercepted the largest part consisting of about 20 vessels. Another boat shadowed four destroyers which it took to be a decoy group.

The boat added that seven of our own boats were in the vicinity, this could not be the case judging by the enemy position reports received. The destroyers must have been in the immediate vicinity of the convoy. After 2300 the greater part of the boats lost contact on account of the poor visibility. The last report of the enemy was received from 8637 A J at 0242. The convoy's strong naval escort was felt as a particular disadvantage. In view of the poor visibility several boats were surprised by the sudden appearance of destroyers and attacked with depth charges. Six of them were severely hunted with depth charges. No planes were observed over the convoy during the day. If planes appeared at evening the boats were ordered to remain on the surface and fight off the attack at all costs, in order that the ground gained would not be lost and the boats would be in a favorable firing position for night attacks. Seven of the 15 boats close to the enemy have not reported as yet. Reports on successes or planned attacks were received from the remaining boats. Eleven more ships totalling 61,581 BRT and one corvette were sunk out of this convoy, and three hits on unidentified targets were observed. The operation continues. As the enemy is today entering the heavily fog-bound area, it is to be expected that only a small portion of the boats will be able to maintain contact. One boat reports that it has been rammed and is withdrawing east unfit for diving. Four boats close by, which have run short of fuel, report that they are going to the rescue. Fifteen of the 40 boats originally engaged have so far broken off the operation because of damage, lack of fuel, and rescue work.

Group "Drossel":

As two boats of Group "Drossel", (the submarines U "477" and U "659") received orders to break through to the Mediterranean, and two boats (the submarines U "406" and U "600") collided with each other for reasons so far unknown and have started on their return passage, the Group now consists of only seven boats, which are to take up position in patrol line from CF 3577 to CG 1428 at 0800 on 6 May. The air reconnaissance flown yesterday for the detection of the northbound SC convoy as well as the Gibraltar convoy did not bring any results. It is being repeated today and will have to be regarded as the last chance of finding these two convoys.

Other boats in the Atlantic:

Five boats coming from Home Waters received temporary operational areas in AK 30. It has been planned to form a new group in this area with the latter boats and those coming from Western France. In order that the boats can proceed north in company, the seven boats en route from Western France will be combined in a patrol line from BD 3238 to BD 1843 as from 7 May, so that they can start from there together on their passage northwards.

A submarine operating on the North American coast sank a tanker of 5,000 BRT south of Cape Hatteras in DC 12.

Plans:

The large boats of type "IX C" have also been temporarily concentrated in this area because of the few boats operating in the North Atlantic. When boats of the type "VII C" coming from Home Waters and from Western France, have arrived and the supply situation becomes favorable, it is planned to withdraw a portion of the former and operate them in other areas. It has been found that during convoy engagements in the North Atlantic the loss percent of the large boats is greater than that of the type "VII C".

2. Mediterranean:

Only two boats remain at sea after the withdrawal of the two boats intended for fuel supplies and at present returning from the operational area. It is expected that these boats also will soon start their return passage. The first boat to transfer fuel in cans to Tunis has put in to Leghorn to load the cargo. Two boats which left Home Waters in April for the Mediterranean have not as yet reported a break through the Straits of Gibraltar. The loss, particularly of the first boat, the submarine U "616", must be reckoned with.

In General:

The submarine U"203" must be presumed lost in the Atlantic. The boat last operated on an acoustic location presumably from a convoy in the West Atlantic and has not reported since, despite repeated requests to do so. The submarine U "616" will also have to be considered lost, as mentioned above.

VII. Aerial Warfare:

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

One hundred sixty seven planes of the 3rd Air Force were on operations in the West, and nine in the Mediterranean.

Lively incursion activity in the western area by day.

Several fighter formations flew over Morlaix and the Somme estuary without any special attacks.

A severe bombing raid on Antwerp took place in the afternoon. Our own fighter forces were tied up to a great extent by decoy and diversionary enemy formations. Only one Spitfire was shot down. Only slight damage to Antwerp.

Bostons and Mosquitoes flew over the Antwerp - Brussels area at night without any particular damage being reported.

No planes were operating over Reich territory, but mines were dropped in the Heligoland Bight.

2. Mediterranean:

Apart from continuous support given to the Army, an uninterrupted attack was carried out against the British headquarters on the southern front. Our bombers attacked the harbor of Jijelli in the evening. No reports on successes have been received.

3. Eastern Front:

Twenty eight planes were shot down to a loss of seven of our own planes on 4 May. Fifty planes attacked Brest Litovsk during the night of 4 May. The planes flew in at a low altitude because of very slight defense and caused considerable damage to base and supply installations.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

Ceuta was passed by 77 vessels in the morning of 5 May, among which were 15 landing craft transports and 21 U.S. submarine chasers. Nearly all freighters and tankers carried large cases as deck cargo. Some freighters were sailing with torpedo nets in the direction of the Mediterranean. Two troop transports carrying troops left Gibraltar for the Atlantic in the afternoon of 5 May.

They are supposed to be French refugees from the Iberian peninsula, according to the Intelligence Center Spain.

No report has been received on the battleship formation.

The following information was gained from the photographic reconnaissance:

In Mers el Khebir:

Among other vessels, the cadet training ship VINDICTIVE, 3 tank landing ships;

In Oran:

Twenty-one tank landing ships and 22 freighters;

In Jijelli:

Forty large and 19 small tank landing craft;

East of Jijelli:

Four tank landing ships, apparently engaged in landing exercises;

Bone:

One tank landing ship, 1 tank landing craft, 9 freighters;

La Valetta:

Three light cruisers, 1 fast minelayer, 6 destroyers, 2 submarines.

Two groups of three destroyers each apparently operated in the Straits of Sicily during the night of 4 May.

No reports from the eastern Mediterranean on 5 May.

Convoys were off Tobruk, Marsa Matruh, Alexandria, and in the Syrte, according to radio intelligence.

Submarine Positions:

off Pantelleria, Capri, La Maddalena, and Cape Gallo.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Two Italian submarines were in the operational area.

The mining operation by PT boats intended for the night of 4 May had to be canceled because of weather conditions; it was carried out west of Bizerta during the night of 5 May.

Italian minesweeping forces remained in Bizerta.

Six minesweeping boats left Antibes by rail for Reggio on 4 May.

An air raid on Taranto on 4 May did not cause any military damage. Air raids on Tunis in the afternoon of 5 May caused slight damage in La Goulette; 3 oil tanks were set on fire, 1 Italian motor boat and several small vessels sank;

3 Italian naval landing craft were severely damaged. The harbor can accomodate only one war transport at present. The approaches to the harbor have been destroyed.

On 5 May the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South reported on the land situation as follows:

"The enemy continues to amass forces on the western front. Preparations for an offensive on the largest scale are indicated at Mateur, Medjez el Bab, and Pont du Jahs. Individual attacks were repulsed; a heavy attack near Mateur broke down after much bloodshed."

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The steamer SAN ANTONIO (6,013 BRT) en route to Bizerta, escorted by a torpedo boat, was sunk by bombers 25 miles north of Trapani in spite of an escort of 55 of our own fighters.

The sinking of the CAMPO BASSO and the escorting torpedo boat PERSEO was belatedly confirmed by survivors of the PERSEO.

The two Italian naval landing craft, which were still missing, returned to Trapani slightly damaged.

Special Items.

I. The German Naval Command, Italy reports its plan to transfer the 7th PT Boat Flotilla to La Goulette for the present, after the destruction of Bizerta, whereas it is planned to base the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla at Marsala. (1345/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

II. Increased military activity has been detected on Cyprus, a well-informed agent reports from Turkey.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

One enemy submarine was reported off Leros in the afternoon of 4 May.

Two motor sailing vessels north of Polykandros were fired on by enemy planes and deserted by their crews.

The destroyer TURBINE and two Italian PT boats returned to Piraeus following their operations off Attica.

The Commander, Coastal Defense Flotilla, Attica has taken over command of patrol operations.

The patrol duties are being carried out by patrol boats. The Italian landing operation continues according to plan.

The steamer FRONSAK which ran aground off Lemnos, sank further; as much as possible of value was salvaged.

The tanker CELENO and the steamers BURGAS and BALKAN with one destroyer and one torpedo boat are en route to the Dardanelles. The ALBA JULIA is scheduled to leave the Dardanelles for Piraeus on 5 May. The DRACHE is to be used to escort the ALBA JULIA taking the place of a submarine chaser which is out of commission owing to engine trouble.

Group South has been informed by Naval Staff of the enemy planes which flew over Bulgarian territory on 2 and 3 May. (1/Skl 13065/43 Gkdos.)

Black Sea:

The PT boats on operations off Cape Idokopas and off Feodosia did not make contact with the enemy.

Air reconnaissance detected a northwest-bound convoy consisting of one tanker and four motor minesweepers off Sukhum.

Six PT boats operated from Ivanbaba against this convoy. The boats were attacked by enemy planes 25 miles southeast of Ivanbaba without damage being caused. One plane was shot down. The operation continues.

The ferry service across the Strait of Kerch and the Anapa and Temriuk transports ran according to schedule.

Special Items:

Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division has been informed by Naval Staff, Operations Division that the six artillery naval landing craft intended for the Black Sea are to be transferred there this summer. Delays in the operations by naval landing craft at other places are to be taken into account. (1/Skl I op 13062/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, XIV.)

IX. Situation East Asia.

The Japanese Admiralty states that 21 enemy fighters were shot down during a raid on Port Darwin on 2 May.

Japanese submarines sank five ships totalling more than 50,000 BRT, among which were three tankers, in Australian waters between 26 Apr. and 2 May. The island of Attu in the Aleutians was shelled by nine enemy ships on 27 Apr. without causing much damage.

The American submarine GRENADIER was sunk by planes and submarine chasers off the Andaman Islands on 22 Apr.

U.S. troops occupied the Russel Islands (Pavuhu) northwest of Guadalcanal on 4 May, according to a report from Washington.

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Items of Political Importance.

Reuter announces the establishment of a Danish Navy within the Allied Forces.

According to the United Press the internal situation on Martinique is said to be so critical, that American marines would have to be called in to safeguard peace and order.

Chile denies a report according to which the U.S.A. had occupied the Easter Islands.

The Naval Attaché at Istanbul submitted a report on the visit of the American General Wilson to Turkey. The report does not in all respects correspond with the opinion held by Naval Staff, and is formulated along too optimistic lines in accordance with the attitude towards Turkey prevaling in the German Embassy at Ankara. At the same time a Japanese comment on Wilson's visit was received, stating that Wilson visited Turkey with strictly limited intentions, and was successful in achieving only a portion of what he set out to do. Most important is the fact that in continuation of the Adana conference, Wilson discussed with Turkey a plan for a possible future offensive against Russia and Germany, and that details were worked out for the shipment of arms to Turkey. (1/Skl 13405/43 Gkdos.)

The Army General Staff, Foreign Armies West transmitted its Enemy Situation Report No. 9/43. In many respects the assessment of the situation does not correspond with the opinion of Naval Staff. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division also stated his viewpoint. (3/Skl 1678/43 Gkdos.)

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. In connection with the photographic reconnaissance of the Icelandic Fjords, the Chief, Naval Staff suggests that Admiral Weichold examines the prospects of trying to penetrate them.

II. The report on the loss of the CAMPO BASSO has been supplemented to the effect that the operation of PT boats was not possible because of the weather conditions. A PT boat escort for convoys is usually provided as a matter of principle.

It will not be possible to repair the HERMES in Tunisia, according to the information at hand. The Chief, Naval Staff has rejected the plan to tow the destroyer to Sicily because of the superiority of the enemy and the impossibility of getting it through. The destroyer must be considered a loss.

III. Cooperation with the Air Force in the Black Sea has now been developed to such an extent that for the first time it was possible to send out naval forces to operate against targets detected by air reconnaissance.

IV. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff:

The withdrawal of anti-aircraft batteries from Bogen and their transfer to Hammerfest is only a temporary measure owing to the shortage of batteries.

The last three PT boats to be transferred left Linz for Galatz.

The naval artillery lighters in Sevastopol are to be ready on 8 May and will proceed direct to their operational area.

Four motor minesweepers are at present on the transfer passage Rhine - Rhone. Three naval landing craft have passed over the land route in France. On the basis of the experience with these boats it will be possible to get about 24 landing craft through monthly.

It has been put on record in an Armed Forces High Command order that in the event of an evacuation of the southeastern area the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southeast will receive full authority to issue orders to all three Branches of the Armed Forces.

It is to be investigated how the HELA, at present being used by the Fleet Command, is to be released for target ship duty with the Commanding Admiral, Submarines.

16,000 t of fuel oil will be made available by the Armed Forces High Command as an operative reserve for the Italian Navy, of which the German Naval Command, Italy is in charge.

V. The Chief, Bureau of Naval Armament.

The Chief, Armed Forces High Command plans as a gesture of good will to place at the disposal of the Japanese certain copyrights for torpedo construction. This would be equivalent to a payment by Germany of 22 1/2 billion marks as against 7 billion marks by Japan. The negotiations regarding the sale of submarines are still pending. The Chief, Armed Forces High Command plans to ask a moderate price. The Chief, Naval Staff intends to point out to Admiral Nomura that the cession of the submarines does not represent a gift.

150,000 French prisoners of war will shortly be transferred to civilian labor. In practice this will not make any difference, as they will remain in their present work and enjoy only nominal liberty.

The iron allotment fixed for the Navy in the Central Plan amounts to 179,500 t monthly; in this way the minimum program is just fulfilled; the increased program for new constructions cannot be implemented in this manner. The reason for the non-fulfilment of naval demands is to be attributed to the iron shortage. The Chief, Naval Staff will, therefore, contact Speer personally. The Chief, Naval Staff refuses to have a representative of the Navy join the Central Plan, as a stronger influence could be exerted from the outside. The Chief, Bureau of Naval Armament points out that in the existing state of affairs the interests of the Navy are not represented in the Central Plan. The Chief, Naval Staff has more confidence in his personal relationship with Speer for safeguarding the interests of the Navy.

VI. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff read out an appeal sent over Radio Moscow and addressed to the Russian Army, to hold itself in readiness for an offensive.

Conference in a very Restricted Circle:

VII. The Chief of Foreign Affairs Section, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports that the Turks bought British ships and announced the changing of the flags without having given any preliminary warning. The German Foreign Office intends to acknowledge the changing of the flags. The question of guaranteeing free passage through the operational area which would indirectly cover British shipments remains to be settled.

The Chief, Naval Staff considers the changing of the flags a political matter, for which Germany ought to demand a high price. No free passage can be guaranteed by the Navy. Shipping through the operational area can take place only at their own risk as heretofore.

VIII. Auxiliary Cruiser Section, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports a statement made by survivor of the DOGGERBANK who was picked up by a Spanish steamer. According to this statement, the DOGGERBANK was torpedoed during the night of 3 March. An investigation shows that the DOGGERBANK crossed the Equator considerably earlier, contrary to her own report and contrary to an explicit radio order, so that at the time of the sinking she was sailing in a section of the channel "Anton" in which submarines had been given permission to operate. The torpedoing of the DUNEDIN STAR on 3 March is the only sinking which is likely to have some connection with this loss. It is very likely that this was in fact the DOGGERBANK. An interrogation of the submarine commander and a written detailed report from the Spanish captain who took the survivor aboard are still awaited. The survivor himself has been interned at Aruba.

Special Items:

I. In reply to deliberate enemy attacks on hospital ships the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South called for the most severe countermeasures. Naval Staff fears these countermeasures will bring undesirable repercussions, and reports to the Armed Forces, Operations Staff as follows:

"Referring to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South F.A. I A (M) B. No. 2100/43 Gkdos. subject: enemy bombing and machine gun attacks on our hospital ships.

The severe countermeasures suggested by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South require in the opinion of Naval Staff most careful consideration, as there is danger that in view of the enemy air superiority in the Mediterranean it is possible that the retaliation may have a greater detrimental effect on ourselves than on the enemy. However, it can certainly be exploited in propaganda and protests made to the "protecting power" and the Red Cross." (1/Skl 13237/43 Gkdos.)

The German Naval Command Italy and the German Special Staff have also been informed.

II. Contrary to his original intention, the Chief, Naval Staff, for reasons of military secrecy, does not want to hand to Admiral Nomura the operational plans for submarines in the Indian Ocean in writing, but will inform him by word of mouth only.

III. The Armed Forces High Command, Intelligence Division submits a treatise on the opinions held by Spanish politicians and economic leaders concerning enemy invasion plans.

Large-scale landing operations, in the summer of 1943, are considered a compelling necessity and inevitable. Germany's military and moral powers of resistance, however, are evaluated so highly that it is considered extremely doubtful that the landing will have a decisive effect on the outcome of the war. On the other hand the enemy reckons to carry out an invasion where the least possible casualties will be involved, which points either to Norway or the Balkans. Italian power of resistance is assessed very low. (3/Skl 7496/43 geh.)

IV. The Chief, Naval Communications Division submits in the Special Radio Monitoring Report No. 18/43 the results of radio intelligence (Chief MND III 1310/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Appendix 'Radio Monitoring Reports).

Reference to the American air transport service in appendix "7", and the organization of the "Task Forces" in the North Atlantic in appendix "8".

Situation 6 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The OSORNO received the following orders for the approach to the Sunda Strait:

1. Steer via point "Yellow Bruno" for point "Etmal". "Yellow Bruno" is situated 6 degrees farther north than point "Expert".

2. Naval Staff expects arrival at point "Etmal" on 12 May at the earliest.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo is being informed about the size and appearance of the ALSTERUFER as requested (see Telegram 0354).

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance detected a northbound convoy consisting of 50 merchant vessels 280 miles northwest of Lisbon. An attack was made without the effects being observed. Enemy planes attacked a harbor defense boat off Brest in the afternoon. The boat shot down two planes and had to be towed into port seriously damaged.

Air reconnaissance in the Bay of Biscay was brisk, 31 planes having been observed.

2. Own Situation:

Area Atlantic Coast:

Two ground mines were swept off the Gironde.

The 8th Destroyer Flotilla has completed its exercises.

Channel Area:

The 2nd Torpedo Boat Flotilla carried out its mining operations during the night of 5 May according to plan. (Keyword "Dornbusch"). From the brief report from the 24th Minesweeper Flotilla on the PT boat engagement during the night of 5 May the following is worth mentioning: As many as ten salvos of torpedoes were observed, partly surface runners. One PT boat was annihilated by a direct hit. Numerous hits on three other boats were observed.

However it is not absolutely certain whether they were destroyed. The total result is as follows: 1 PT boat destroyed, 2 boats probably, 2 boats seriously damaged; no losses on our side. The Chief, Naval Staff congratulated the 24th Minesweeper Flotilla on its dash and offensive spirit. (1/Skl I a 13887/43 Gkdos. in C II a.)

The 5th PT Boat Flotilla reports that on 5 May it carried out an extensive LMB-fouling as planned. On their return passage the boats were attacked by night reconnaissance planes and night fighters without sustaining damage.

Special Items:

1. Group West reports intention to reinforce the flanking minefields. Three operations have been planned which will go by the keywords "Dahlie", "Dornbusch", and "Dotterblume". (1/Skl 1350/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

2. The Commander, Destroyers reports that the transfer to the western area of the torpedo boats MOEVE, GREIF, and JAGUAR will probably take place on 11 or 12 May following the completion of some repairs in Wilhelmshaven. (1/Skl 1362/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, II b.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

A fast motor boat was fired on by a patrol boat north of Goerel (Holland) during the night of 5 May. Sea target alarm was sounded in the area during the night of 5 May because of enemy PT boats off Ijmuiden. A minesweeper flotilla was attacked by fighter planes off Texel, inflicting casualties. One ground mine was swept off Terschelling. Enemy PT boats were sighted off the Scheldt estuary. Mines are suspected on the shipping routes as a result of enemy flights north of Schiermonikoog as far as Norderney.

Escort duties in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out as planned.

Special Items:

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses North submits a request for the reinforcement of anti-aircraft artillery units under his command. (See Telegram 2125.)

2. Norway, Northern Waters.

Enemy Situation:

A Murmansk bound convoy is to sail from Canada on 3 May, according to a source the reliability of which has not yet been tested.

Meteorological reconnaissance over Jan Mayen, the Faeroes, and Iceland was without enemy sighting.

One Russian submarine lay off the Norwegian arctic coast and two in Kola Bay, according to radio intelligence. Enemy air activity over the North Sea was normal. Fourteen planes were operating in the Iceland region.

Russian batteries on the Ribachi peninsula fired on boats in the approaches to Petsamo on 3 and 4 May.

Planes flew over the area of Berlevaag, Vardoe, and Petsamo. One of our own convoys was attacked without success by torpedo planes off Skudesnes on the evening of 5 May.

Own Situation:

The minelayer SKAGERRAK laid a flanking minefield north of Hammerfest on 5 May. The anti-aircraft defense of the submarine base Hammerfest was reported to be ready for action.

The Norwegian steamer ANDENES (863 BRT) ran aground in Oslofjord.

Fifteen ships were escorted north, and 17 south.

Special Items:

I. The Commanding General, Armed Forces Norway, who for reasons of secrecy has not been informed so far on shipping movements on the Norwegian coast, requests information on our own operations, so as to avoid taking wrong action through ignorance of the facts, as happened on one occasion.

Group North suggests meeting the request of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Norway with certain restrictions, and to have the information effected from time to time through the Naval Chief Command, Norway. (See Telegram 1210 and 1634/43.)

II. The request of the Naval Chief Command, Norway to exchange the 4th Minesweeper Flotilla stationed there for a flotilla of minesweepers "40" has

been rejected by Naval Staff, as the fuel oil situation is the same in all theaters of war. (See Telegram 1734.)

III. Naval Staff informs Group North and Naval Chief Command, Norway that, in accordance with the view of Group North, only the laying out of the minefields "NW 41" to "44" has been sanctioned. The necessity for laying out the other minefields requested is not acknowledged. (1/Skl I E 10281/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Shipping and Transport Branch informs Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces Overseas on the possibilities of troop transports to Norway for the railway construction program. The necessary transport facilities can probably be provided, whereas an increase in the number of escort vessels is not possible, so that the execution of the transports to a time schedule cannot be guaranteed. (1/Skl 13711/43 Geh.)

Group North submits a report on operation "Brausewetter" (the establishment of a meteorological station on Bear Island using the trawler COBURG). The operation was carried out quickly and successfully despite difficult ice conditions. (1/Skl 12535/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

One minesweeper and nine motor minesweepers left Kronstadt for the west on 5 May. As many as 19 patrol boats were detected in the Sea Canal under the Karelian coast during the night of 5 May, and 34 patrol boats in the evening of 6 May. Several sudden bursts of fire emanated from Leningrad, Kronstadt, and the Karelian coast in the evening and at night.

Numerous patrol boats were stationed off Lavansaari. Three merchant vessels were in the harbor, seven patrol boats in the northern bay.

Twenty eight small ships were distributed in the bays off Oranienbaum.

Enemy air activity in the coastal regions was very brisk at night and during the morning hours; bombs were dropped.

2. Own Situation:

The Danish steamer TRIO (490 BRT) struck a mine and sank of Kullen, so did a ferry-boat and a harbor defense vessel off Copenhagen. Two mines were swept off Copenhagen and two south of Helsingoer.

There is a suspicion that mines fitted with a device for delayed activation are being laid. Five ships were escorted and 17 vessels detailed to patrol the channels in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. The leave-transport Aarhus - Oslo had to be postponed from 6 to 7 May because of a shortage of escort vessels.

Fourteen explosive floats were swept off the barrage "Warthburg III".

Our own batteries fired on a large vessel in the Petrograd Sea Canal on the evening of 6 May, which was covered by a smoke screen laid by 13 patrol boats. Two patrol boats were sunk, two damaged. The enemy ship returned to Leningrad. One gun of the battery "Koenigsberg" was damaged by an enemy battery and by air attacks.

Seiskari was bombed. The results could not be ascertained because of the severe anti-aircraft defense.

V. Merchant Shipping.

1. The Reich Commissioner for Shipping informs the offices concerned that shipping is to be suspended for the present in view of the aggravated condition of the Rotterdam traffic. (1/Skl 13742/43 geh. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XI.)

2. The Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries has submitted a chart showing additional sea areas which have been sanctioned for fishing in the Baltic area. (1/Skl 13500/43 geh.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Operations:

Atlantic:

As there has not been any contact with the ON convoy since 6 May, the operation of Group "Fink" was broken off yesterday at noon. As a result of

foggy weather and poor visibility the boats were surprised by suddenly appearing destroyers and were severely hunted with depth charges. The naval escort of the convoy was obviously reinforced yesterday, for, following the breaking off of operations, 15 boats were intercepted and attacked by groups of submarine chasers. Two boats were damaged, six boats have not reported so far. If these boats should be lost, this fact must be largely attributed to location. All boats report unanimously that they were detected in the fog and attacked by destroyers. The submarine U "125" is definitely lost. The boat was rammed and rendered unfit for diving; it attempted to withdraw. Four other boats launched to render assistance did not find the submarine U "125", and it has not reported since. One boat submerged nearby heard a heavy explosion and sinking noises following gunfire.

The operation against this convoy was extraordinarily handicapped by poor visibility. This became especially noticeable during the second night, when 15 boats made contact, but could not attack and lost it again because of poor visibility. The overall success in combatting this convoy amounts to 16 ships sunk totalling 90,500 BRT, one corvette sunk, and three ships torpedoed. No anti-aircraft defense was observed during the entire operation. As against that, the naval escort, however, must be regarded as extraordinarily heavy, especially from the second day on. It must be attributed to the poor visibility that nearly all boats were severely hunted with depth charges.

A new disposition in the same naval area has been planned with those boats of Group "Fink" that are still operating. It cannot be decided just yet whether the HX convoy expected about 8 May will choose the northern or southern route. A disposition in the north is out of the question because of the low fuel supplies of the greater number of the boats, so there is no alternative but to detail the boats to a patrol line across the southern route.

Our air reconnaissance observed a convoy on northerly course west of the Bay of Biscay yesterday at noon. The boats of Group "Drossel" were detailed to operate in sectors. Two boats have gained contact, according to reports received so far. The operation continues.

In the central Atlantic a submarine intercepted a convoy, course west, in heavy weather. The boat was, however, forced off the convoy by the air and naval escort. One boat was to carry out a minelaying task off Landsend. It broke off this operation because of fierce enemy counter-action.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

The 3rd Air Force put 73 planes on operations in the western area

and six in the Mediterranean.

Isolated planes flew over the Heligoland Bight and northern and western France during the day without delivering any attacks. No planes flew over Reich territory during the night.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Bomber planes were on operations in support of our own front.

The enemy air force supported enemy attacks on the western front with greatly superior forces. Thirteen planes were shot down.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff has rejected a request made by the Naval Command, Norway for the transfer of a carrier-borne squadron to Norway, giving reasons in detail. (See 1/Skl 13112/43 Gkdos.)

II. The Air Force Planning Division has sent the minutes of a conference, at which the improvement of seaplanes was discussed, and has given information on plans for future construction. (1/Skl 12967/43 Gkdos.)

III. Naval Staff has informed all quarters concerned that the great variety of tasks which the Air Force fighter command is called upon to perform necessitates the central direction of fighter operations through the Commander in Chief, Air Force Command Center. Units under this command will receive separate instructions on the requisites for fighter defense (1/Skl 13071/43 Gkdos.).

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The battleship KING GEORGE put in to Gibraltar from the Atlantic on 6 May. The NELSON returned to Gibraltar from the Mediterranean during the night of 6 May.

The landing craft transports which left Gibraltar on 2 May are said to have loaded tanks and ammunition.

Air reconnaissance detected six destroyers, course northeast, off La Galite on the afternoon of 6 May.

Submarines were off Elba and Naples on 5 May, and off the northwestern tip of Sardinia and off Brindisi on 6 May.

Considerable French forces with landing equipment were concentrated west of Algiers, according to an unverified agent's report. These troops are said to be destined for a landing in France.

A report from de Gaullist circles in Marseilles states that air raids on Marseilles are to take place in connection with large-scale Allied landing operations in the northern Mediterranean.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Two Italian submarines are in the operational area.

The submarine U "616" reported last night having successfully cleared the Straits of Gibraltar.

Two PT boats carried out a mining operation off Bizerta.

The 5th Army Command (Armored Division) ordered vital installations in Bizerta to be blown up. The western section of the town is to be evacuated by evening. (See Telegram 1330.)

During an air raid on Marsala on the morning of 6 May three auxiliary motor minesweepers were sunk, five Siebel ferries and four infantry landing craft burned out. Damage was inflicted on harbor installations. At the same time an air raid on Trapani took place, in the course of which one minesweeper was sunk. Heavy damage to buildings. Four attacking planes were shot down. Reggio and Messina were raided towards noon. In Reggio an ammunition steamer exploded, and two small steamers sank. Damage to buildings and railway installations. The anti-aircraft artillery shot down six planes, and fighters one plane.

The hospitalship PRINCIPESSA GIOVANNI was attacked by fighter-bombers off Cape Bon in the afternoon of 5 May. The ship had to return to Tunis after being hit by bombs.

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South reports on the land situation on 6 May as follows:

The large-scale offensive started on 6 May from the area of Mateur and northeast of Medjes el Bab with strong artillery and air support. The enemy succeeded in penetrating on a broad front northeast of Medjes el Bab. The 15th Armored Division, fighting desperately to the last man, was annihilated. There is danger now that the Army Group may be split into two parts. The southern and southwestern fronts were quiet.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The war transports KT "5", "9", and "21" left Messina in the night of 5 May, in order to proceed to Tunis via Trapani.

The steamer SAN PEDRO (6,947 BRT) and the motorship TOMASEO (3,200 BRT) left Naples bound for Tunis. Four Siebel ferries and four infantry landing craft have been en route from Tunis to Marsala since 5 May.

Special Items.

I. The Chief, Naval Staff addressed the following radio message to the Chief, German Naval Command, Tunisia:

"Your radio message 1159 of 3 May supported my resolution to employ German submarines for sending supplies to Tunisia. All German naval forces in the Mediterranean will continue to concentrate on the battle for Tunisia, because the battle the brave German and allied soldiers are waging there is of extreme importance to the war in the Mediterranean.

Good luck to you and your men."

(1/Skl I a 1355/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. The German Naval Command, Italy requests two French yachts to be used as auxiliary submarine chasers, and one motor sailing vessel under construction in Ars as a submarine decoy ship. (See Telegrams 2001 and 2100.)

III. The Commander, Submarines, Italy states that, in accordance with instructions from the Chief of Transportation, Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, the submarines are not loading gasoline but ammunition in short supply. (1/Skl 13260/43 Gkdos.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Enemy planes continuously flew over the sea area around Milos in the evening of 5 May.

Own Situation:

The motor vessel DRACHE was suddenly attacked by an enemy submarine northeast of the Doro Canal in the evening of 5 May. Her forward gun was hit. The ready-use ammunition caught fire. A hit on the submarine conning tower was scored with certainty. The attempt at ramming the boat failed, as the boat dived.

The boat was hunted with 102 depth charges. A success could not be claimed for certain. Numerous casualties were suffered on board the DRACHE.

The convoy ALBA JULIA was re-directed to Trikkeri. A steam tanker and two transfer steamers entered the Dardanelles at noon on 5 May. Other convoy traffic ran according to schedule.

Black Sea:

A group of motor minesweepers of foreign origin was unsuccessfully bombed off Mariupol.

The PT boats detailed to operate against the tanker convoy returned without success. The enemy convoy apparently slowed down after the PT boats were sighted by enemy planes.

Italian PT boats were on operations off Gelenjik and Feodosia, motor minesweepers south of the Taman peninsula on 6 May. Ship "19" and the mine exploding vessel "192" are en route to Kerch serving as a dock escort.

The naval artillery lighters MAL "1" to "3" will be ready to leave the dockyard at Sevastopol on 10 May, the remaining parts of the naval artillery lighter MAL "4" have arrived in Constanta. The naval artillery lighters MAL "6" and "7" are in transit by rail.

The ferry traffic across the Kerch Strait and the Temriuk and Anapa transports ran to schedule.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

According to an Exchange report the Allied Navies have the following naval forces at their disposal:

Free France	49	warships with	6,150 men
Norway	53	" "	5,100 "
Netherlands	63	" "	6,850 "
Poland	12	" "	2,600 "
Greece	33	" "	5,450 "
Yugoslavia	3	" "	200 "
Belgium	7	" "	350 "

Two days ago a Danish Navy was added to these.

The Director of the U.S. Office of War Information, Davis, stated at a press conference that "it is beyond question that the Allies will undertake operations on the European continent in the course of this summer."

The former vice-president of the publishing concern of "Time", "Life" and "Fortune", Jackson, has been appointed Chief of the American Office of War Information in North Africa and is to direct the psychological warfare against the Axis from the Mediterranean Theater.

The British periodical "The Economist" deals with the annihilation of Germany in 1944 or 1945 as predicted by Churchill. The periodical doubts whether a victory achieved in 1944 or 1945 will not be already too late for subsequent world cooperation. The Russian forces are described as being very much exhausted, and the Russians are hoping for a second front this year as the only help in their deadly struggle. The cooperation of the Allies depends on the events of 1943.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division has submitted maps showing our shipping losses, or losses in shipping commissioned by us as the result of enemy action in the last two months. The ground mine is shown as being responsible for most of the losses. It is evident from this to what a great extent the enemy Air Force is responsible for the losses, both in this way and through direct action. (1/Skl I E 13419/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

II. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports on a secret order which Laval issued to Admiral Robert during the night of 5 May containing instructions for the scuttling of the ships in Martinique.

III. Conference in a Restricted Circle:

The Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff reports that the Swedes have been given permission to resume the Gotenburg traffic, after they gave the assurance that the ships DICTO and LYCNEL would not leave before 1 Oct.

IV. The Chief, Naval Communications Division (Rear Admiral Stummel) reports that the new results in the absorption of radar waves would have to be received with scepticism. One is not yet by any means sure that this absorption is fully effective with the new valve system. The Chief, Naval Communications Division considers the research work pursued in agreement with Minister Speer holds greater promise of success.

Special Items.

I. The Chief, Naval Staff participated at noon in the conference on the situation with the Fuehrer, who is at present in Berlin.

On this occasion the Fuehrer outlined the situation in Italy roughly as follows:

"The Duce and the Fascist Party are resolved to hold out with Germany through thick and thin. A portion of the Officers Corps (more in the upper strata, less in the lower) is, even now, inclined towards the conclusion of a peace treaty. Treachery might be expected in certain influential circles."

It could be deduced from statements made by Lt.Gen. Warlimont, who has just returned from Italy, that the loss of Tunisia is no longer of the same deep consequence to Italy, as long as the leadership remains securely in the Duce's hands. The Duce's health, therefore is of the utmost importance. It is satisfactory at present.

The enemy's next move is not expected until after the fall of Tunisia, and will probably be concentrated against Sardinia, not so much against Sicily because of the German troops there. The Commander in Chief, Navy gathers from the report by Lt.Gen. Warlimont and additional discussions that the development of the Tunisian situation must be regarded as a tragedy. The magnificent troops, excelling in fighting spirit and ability, were frustrated exclusively by the lack of supplies. 1,500 t daily would have been sufficient to guarantee its requirements.

If, commencing in November, all means had been concentrated on achieving the one aim, Tunisia could have been held. When the German element was reinforced because of the dangerous development in the situation, it was already too late. Italian leadership is, even today, lenient and lacks in tenacity; it has been morally strengthened by the reports of the officers from the front in Tunisia.

From these reports it can be seen without a doubt that our troops could have held out despite the numerical and material superiority of the enemy, because the latter is slack, cautious, and for the most part lacking in training and experience.

But even in the present situation, it is correct to adhere to our previous resolution, to hold the bridgehead as long as possible. Each week of resistance in Africa represents a gain to us. The Fuehrer plans to give armed support to the Fascists in Italy, so as to raise the power of resistance in this country.

The Commander in Chief, Navy is, therefore, convinced of the correctness of the clear policy followed by the Navy, which, he gathers, is also highly appreciated by the Fuehrer, and is resolved to continue all attempts to get supplies through to the bridgehead. When the large ports (Bizerta, Tunis) fall, then small vessels and submarines will have to carry the supplies to the Bon peninsula. Evacuation of retreating troops and materiel is out of the question because of the lack of transport space. The Fuehrer consented reluctantly to the evacuation of some of the retreating staffs.

But it is the solemn and loyal duty of the Navy to deliver every possible ton of supplies to the heroic fighting troops. For this reason, even more submarines must be used for the transport of supplies, even if losses have to be expected, and new boats must be transferred from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, so as to be able to meet the situation which may at any time develop here.

The Commander in Chief, Navy has ordered that his decision once more be made absolutely clear to the German Special Staff and the Naval Command, Italy, together with the order to commit all German vessels unhesitatingly to the Tunisian supply service.

The Commander in Chief, Navy also reported to the Fuehrer his measures for the furtherance of location projects in conjunction with Minister Speer. The Fuehrer fully agreed and stated that this work should be done in conjunction with Speer, as Speer excelled in getting things done quickly. He had already found this out when it came to the production of new army weapons.

The Fuehrer criticized the Air Force and asks for systematic concentration on a single objective instead of splitting up the forces as has been done far too frequently in the past. As an example he referred to the necessity of smashing the harbor of Murmansk, thus bringing the discussion round to the subject of supplies to Northern Russia.

On this occasion, when the matter of increased supplies via Iran and of the convoys failing to make their appearance in November was dealt with, the Commander in Chief, Navy reported to the Fuehrer that he is planning to dispatch a submarine group to the Arabian Gulf after the cessation of the southwest monsoon; he also mentioned the German task force in the northern area which was not only courageous but also enraged, and would not forget that the Fuehrer had called them "saurians".

II. A British courier who crashed over Spain carried on himself a personal communication from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to General Alexander, dated 23 Apr. Its contents are summarized as follows:

1. Two landing operations are planned. Keywords "Husky" and "Brimstone".

2. "Husky" apparently standing for Greece. At any rate, planned reinforcement of the 5th Division for an attack on Cape Araxas, and of the56th Division for attack on Calamata.

3. "Brimstone" apparently stands for an operation in the western Mediterranean..

4. A feint operation on the Dodecanese is suggested for the operation "Husky", and a feint operation on Sicily for the operation "Brimstone".

No judgement can be passed at present on the authenticity of the document.

The General Staff is investigating to what extent the troop detachments referred to can be connected with the plans.

Mine Situation.

III. In 1/Skl I E 13296/43 Gkdos. the Naval Staff informed all subordinate naval commanders that a timing device was found attached to the mooring rope of a Russian aerial mine, with settings from two hours up to ten days. The floating mine remains active and destroyes itself automatically after the expiration of the set time.

Naval Station Baltic, Admiral Denmark, and the Mining and Barrage Inspectorate have been informed that the Danes may be instructed on ELM/A to the same extent as other operational units. A more comprehensive instruction which might enable the Danes to develop their own defense measures is not to take place. (1/Skl I E 13248/43 Gkdos.)

IV. With reference to a conference held on 7 May with the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff. the demands made by Naval Staff, Operations Division as regards the speed and range of destroyers and torpedo boats are being sent to the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division.

The demands have been made with due regard for the present situation in naval warfare prevailing and for that which may be expected in the near future. (Copy as per 1/Skl III a 13347/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.)

V. Naval (Ship) Construction Division informs all offices concerned that the work on the new submarine chaser "42" is to be suspended because of the necessary restriction on the construction of various types of ships. (1/Skl 13942/43 geh.)

VI. Armed Forces High Command, Intelligence Division passed on a treatise written by the Finnish General Staff on the capture of Leningrad. The Finnish views coincide in their essential aspects with the German. In connection with this Naval Staff, Operations Division has asked for a statement of the possibilities of using naval forces on Lake Ladoga. A thorough investigation of this question will yet have to be made. (1/Skl I a 13449/43 Gkdos.)

VII. Vice Admiral Weichold has investigated the possibilities of operations against the East Iceland fjords. (See War Diary, Part A, 6 Apr.) Seydisfjord is the only one which can be considered - it is protected by mines and net barrages and is not permanently occupied. The risk entailed for a submarine and sabotage squad is out of proportion to the probable success. A special operation against the fjord is considered inadvisable. (Copy as per 1/Skl 1364/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

VIII. With regard to the direction of submarines in the event of an offensive in the western area, Group West issued a directive, in connection with which a suggestion is being submitted by Naval Staff, Submarine Division. Naval Staff, Operations Division then requested Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch to issue instructions which in the opinion of Naval Staff, Operations Division should be phrased as follows:

"1. Commander, Submarines, West to report to Naval Staff (Naval Staff, Operations Division and Submarine Division) and Naval Group West, which boats will be ready to sail, and the degree of their operational readiness.

2. Naval Group West will submit his requirements as regards the use of submarines in the defense against landings to Naval Staff. Naval Staff will decide, on the instructions of the Commanding Admiral, which boats are to be detailed to operate against the invading forces.

3. The direction of the boats operating in the coastal approaches as well will remain in the hands of Naval Staff, Submarine Division. In special isolated cases, or if the general situation should require it, the boats operating against the landing forces can be made operationally subordinate to Commander, Submarines, West. A separate directive will be issued later on the subordination of the Commander, Submarines to Naval Group West."

(Copy as per 1/Skl 11415/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.)

Situation 7 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

All ships in Foreign Waters are being instructed on movements of auxiliary cruisers in the Central Atlantic and on the appointment of a new U.S. Naval Commander in South America (Radiogram 0825).

The ALSTERUFER received the following instructions for the approach to the Sunda Strait:

"1. Steer for point "Lilie" via point "Yellow Caesar". "Yellow Caesar" is situated 9 degrees farther north than "Rose".

2. ALSTERUFER is expected to arrive at "Lilie" on 16 May at the earliest."

(Radiogram 2235.)

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Two reliable agents report independently of each other that a British offensive using paratroops on a large scale is to be expected in the coastal region of Northern France during the first half of May. (1/Skl 13873/43 geh. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

In the morning of 7 May air reconnaissance observed five or six small merchant vessels off Great Yarmouth, and five or six steamers with two destroyers, and some patrol boats, off Lowestoft. One steamer and two PT boats were sighted off Portland towards noon. Air reconnaissance observed 44 merchant vessels, 1 destroyer, and 4 patrol boats, course 40°, 400 miles west of Cape Ortegal, position being not quite definite.

Twenty one planes were operating west of the Bay of Biscay. Thirteen planes of the 19th Group were detected.

A reliable agent reports from Northern Ireland that eleven transports, among which were the BERENGARIA and WESTPOINT with roughly 25,000 U.S.A. troops on board, arrived in Liverpool on 13 and 14 apr. The convoy was a very strongly escorted part-convoy, which included for the first time again a battleship of the IDAHO class.

The troops disembarked in Liverpool comprise a complete infantry division.

The British steamer SEMINOLE was detected in tow in the Spanish coastal region, according to radio intelligence.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

A mine-exploding vessel was attacked by planes off Brest on the forenoon of 7 May. One plane which crashed on the mine-exploding vessel was shot down by minesweepers and patrol boats jointly. The mine-exploding vessel was slightly damaged.

One EIM/J was swept off Brest.

Channel Area:

The 2nd Torpedo Boat Flotilla laid the last one of the three mine-fields southwest of Boulogne (keyword "Dotterblume").

The PT boat operation had to be canceled because of weather conditions.

Special Items.

I. The Commander, 8th Destroyer Flotilla submitted a short report on the exercises carried out by the destroyers in the Bay of Biscay from 3 to 6 May. The destroyers were not detected by British air reconnaissance during this time, apparently because of the poor weather conditions. The exercises with our Air Force was valuable to both parties. The exercises with a submarine brought absolutely unsatisfactory results as regards our location gear.

The multi-unit hydrophones proved to be the best gear at present for the timely interception of enemy targets by night, as the working of the radar gear is unsatisfactory during a swell. The funnel fog functioned well on all boats. Isolated break-downs occurred in the engine installations. (Details in 1/Skl 13342/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

II. The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West reported in detail on 4 May how the execution of the new mine escort has been planned. Naval Staff then informed Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Naval Staff, Hydrographic Division, and Naval Armament Bureau that the request of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West for the immediate laying of navigation cables is to be complied with. At the same time the approval for the laying of the navigation cables is being transmitted to the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West and the other offices concerned in the western area, as well as in this building, at the same time pointing out the danger of compromising the channels by light floats. (1/Skl 13116/43 Gkdos.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Three ground mines were swept in the Heligoland Bight. The air attack on patrol boats in the morning of 7 May caused slight damage. The convoy traffic in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North was without any particular incident. The patrol positions were only partially manned because of weather conditions.

The minelaying operation "Quersprung" (extension of the West Wall) was carried out according to plan.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance was flown to Iceland, Jan Mayen, the Faeroes, and Bear Island without any special results.

Radio intelligence intercepted four Russian submarines off the Norwegian arctic coast, and three in Kola Bay. No air reconnaissance was detected over the North Sea. Two planes of the Iceland squadron were operating. Three planes approached Petsamo at noon on 6 May.

Own Situation:

A convoy en route to Kirkenes was attacked by twelve planes without damage being caused. The same convoy reports anti-submarine warning being sounded off the entrance to the Varangerfjord in the evening.

A long range torpedo salvo was fired on a convoy off Kyberg. A Norwegian steamer reported a westbound submarine east of Kristiansand South.

Twenty six ships were escorted north, and 32 ships south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Baltic:

The composition of the Russian Baltic Fleet according to March air reconnaissance is as follows:

A. Ships apparently ready for operations or damaged and under repair:

Battleship OKTOBER REVOLUTION;
Cruisers MAXIM GORKI, KIROV;
Minelaying cruiser MARTI;
Flagship LENINGRAD; 8 destroyers;
6 torpedo boats; 7 minesweepers;
6 auxiliary gunboats; 50 minesweeping and patrol boats;
130 PT boats or motor boats; 8 auxiliary vessels.

B. Ships no longer in commission, or still under construction, on which work has been suspended:

Aircraft carrier VOROSHILOV; Battleship SOVJETKI-SOJUS, MARAT;
(apparently serving as stationary gun emplacement in Kronstadt)
Cruisers KUYBISHEV, CHAPAYEV, SHELESNIAKOV, PETROPAVLOVSK, AVRORA
(serving as stationary gun emplacement in Oranienbaum)
Flagship MINSK, 11 destroyers; 8 escort vessels; 2 torpedo boats;
4 auxiliary vessels. Thirty one submarines are in Leningrad, 10 in Kronstadt, and 1 in Oranienbaum, according to the photographic interpretation of 14 March. The first submarine out of port was sighted between Lavansaari and Peninsaari on 18 Apr.

Five vessels were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Seventeen vessels were on operations sweeping the channels.

A sinking Swedish steamer is being towed in shallow waters by three tugboats near Sassnitz. One mine was swept off Fehmarn, one off Kjelsnor, and one off Anholt.

The barrages "Seeigel 33" and "34" were laid according to plan; so was the barrage "Nashorn VI a". Six UMA's were swept, probably from the former barrage "Nashorn XIV". The Finns are at present laying the barrage "Sola A".

The Finnish gunboat TURNUMAA recently bombed and sunk, has been raised and towed into port.

Two leave ships from Libau entered Hangoe on 7 May, two additional steamers carrying troops reached Jacobstadt from Reval on 7 May.

V. Merchant Shipping.

Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch and Shipping and Transport Branch have been informed by Naval Staff, Operations Division of the urgent demand for buoy-layers for the buoyage of mineswept channels; also that Naval Staff, Operations Division emphatically supports a request made by Naval Staff, Hydrographic and Meteorological Division for the return of the former buoy-layer NEUWERK, which is now the tug ATHET (1/Skl II 13607/43 geh.).

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

A source whose reliability has not yet been tested reports from Stockholm on 5 May that a convoy left Canada for Polyarno on 3 May, and that an additional convoy with planes will leave the U.S.A. for the same destination. A convoy of ships in ballast will be leaving Polyarno for Canada any day now.

Statements made by crew members of British freighters on being interrogated about ships, reveal that considerable quantities of aircraft material will be shipped from the U.S.A. to Great Britain and Russia on 15 May. The convoy is said to consist of 32 freighters which are to be joined by ten tankers. The convoys from St. John's and the U.S.A. to Gibraltar are to pass 80 to 100 miles south of the Azores and north of Madeira.

2. Operations:

Groups "Fink" and "Amsel" have been dissolved and two new Groups "Rhein" and "Elbe" formed.

These two groups are being set up in a north-south line east of Newfoundland on the assumption that the next convoys sailing for Great Britain will use the southerly route. On the basis of a radio monitoring report the passing of an HX convoy can be expected at noon on 8 May.

The convoy operation of Group "Fink" probably resulted in the loss of six boats, which have not reported again in spite of repeated requests to do so. This high figure is to be attributed to the strong naval escort, which in conjunction with the poor visibility was extraordinarily favored in its defensive measures. With the poor visibility prevailing, the boats were presumably intercepted at closest range, thus making an avoiding movement to lower depths impossible. It can be concluded from this, that an operation against a convoy with a strong escort and in poor visibility will no longer be possible because of the losses to be expected, and that, in future, such an operation will have to be broken off when the first indications of poor visibility appear.

Yesterday Group "Drossel" intercepted an expected convoy, sank one steamer of 7,000 BRT, and scored a hit on one other vessel. Strong air escort by night and day and poor visibility caused a break in the contact, so that the operation will have to be broken off, if the search brings no results by the morning of 8 May.

The minelaying task by a boat off the North Channel was carried out twelve miles northwest of the prescribed spot because of the strong defense.

Three boats in the Bay of Biscay must be presumed lost. Two additional boats were so heavily bombed that they had to start on their return passage to western France. In this way three boats were totally lost here within a week, and three were forced to return because of damage.

These losses are unbearable. As a result of the shortage of our own air forces no effective counteroperations against enemy air forces can be expected in this naval area in the near future. The enemy possesses absolute superiority in the air. As a countermeasure two submarines are being prepared as anti-aircraft decoy boats, the first of which will be ready for operations this month. The submerged passage of the boats, however, must for the present be considered as the best protection. It must not be overlooked in this connection that the time spent in the greatly endangered area is considerably prolonged by the slow speed, and also that the boats must proceed on the surface from four to five hours per day in order to charge their batteries. Consequently, this measure cannot be considered absolutely safe either.

South of Freetown one boat lost contact with a transport convoy, forced off by the latter's escort. Another boat on passage to Capetown did not sight anything on the route prescribed, or off St. Helena.

The first Italian transport submarine is due to leave on her passage to Japan on 8 May.

Special Items.

An investigation into the influence of radar on the submarine war in the Bay of Biscay has been made by the Chief of Naval Communications Division, Naval Staff. It is particularly emphasized that there are indications that the enemy is using location facilities which cannot be adequately determined by our defense.

In order to counteract the superior location methods of the enemy, the setting up of a Radar Experimental and Training Squad under command of Group West has been ordered, with immediate effect. (For details see 1/Skl 13233/43 Gkdos.)

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

One hundred forty one planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating in the western area, seven planes in the Mediterranean. Twelve FW 190's carried out a harassing raid on Lowestoft in the morning of 7 May. Twenty FW 190's attacked Great Yarmouth by day. Three bombers attacked Bristol and seven Bournemouth in the night of 7 May.

Incursion activity over occupied western territories was slight by day and during the night; there were no planes over Reich territory. One Spitfire was shot down by a mine-exploding vessel.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

The 2nd Air Force dispatched 33 bombers, 24 heavy fighters, 93 fighters, and 14 reconnaissance planes on operations.

Fighter-bombers attacked enemy targets in the area of St. Cyprien (near Tunis).

3. Eastern Front:

On 7 May 146 enemy planes were shot down in aerial combats and anti-aircraft artillery, and nine by infantry units.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

It is reported retrospectively that at least 28 vessels passed Tangier in the direction of the Atlantic during the night of 5 May. On the evening of 6 May four freighters put in to Gibraltar from the Atlantic and three freighters and one destroyer left for the Mediterranean. One probable battleship passed Tangier in the direction of the Atlantic during the night of 6 May. The FORMIDABLE with five destroyers returned to Gibraltar from the Mediterranean on 7 May. One tank landing craft, nine motor gunboats, and nine motor launches put in from the Atlantic on 7 May. The landing craft transport ships, reported on 30 Apr., have been estimated at from 2,000 to 2,500 BRT.

Air Reconnaissance:

Four landing craft off Cape Tenes, ten steamers, and several patrol boats in the forenoon of 7 May. Fifteen merchant vessels and patrol boats were detected off Dellys. Three enemy destroyers were off Galite in the afternoon, off Bizerta in the evening, and turned about to sail west off Cape Bon during the night. Two unidentified vessels were observed off Pantelleria during the night. Enemy submarines were off Leghorn and off Cape Vaticano on 7 May.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Two Italian submarines are in the operational area. The submarine U "410" also forced her way through the Straits of Gibraltar and is operating in the western Mediterranean. The transport submarine "380" has been stopped in Leghorn because of the enemy occupation of Tunis.

Two PT boats arrived from Bizerta in Trapani, an additional one in Empedocle in the forenoon of 7 May. The PT boats S "153" and S "154" are on passage from Augusta to Toulon via Maddalena. Two motor minesweepers and four auxiliary motor minesweepers are en route from Bizerta to Tunis, five auxiliary motor minesweepers with ammunition from Trapani to Marsala.

The destroyer HERMES was scuttled as ordered in the navigable channel off La Goulette in the morning of 7 May.

The Army Group ordered the demolition of the harbor installations of Tunis. The German Naval Command Tunisia reports the blowing up of various batteries and the transfer of the staff to the Bon peninsula.

The steamer STELLA (1,394 BRT) sank during an air raid on Reggio, and the war transport KT "11" was partly burned out and ran aground.

Two cars of the Naval Motor Pool were severely damaged during an air raid on Marsala during the night of 6 May.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

In accordance with requests from Army Group no further ships are to sail to Tunisia, except small vessels to the coastal ports of the Bon peninsula.

The SAN PETRO put in to Palermo, and the TOMASEO to Trapani, both steamers are to be escorted back again.

Four Siebel ferries and four infantry landing craft arrived in Marsala from Trapani on 6 May. Four Siebel ferries and three infantry landing craft left Tunis in the evening of 6 May. One German naval landing craft reached Marsala from Tunis on 7 May; no reports from four Italian naval landing craft have yet been received.

The hospital ship P. GIOVANNI made a brief call at Trapani on 6 May while en route from Naples to Tunis.

The German steamer PLUTO (1,156 BRT) ran aground off Sevenico.

Special Items.

I. The Chief of the German Naval Command Tunisia replied as follows to the radio message from Chief, Naval Staff dated 6 May.

"Your confidence puts me and my men under an obligation. Everything possible will be done."

(1/Skl 13261/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. Ordering everything possible to be thrown into the fight for Tunis Chief, Naval Staff issued the following message to the German Special Staff and the German Naval Command, Italy:

"All available information confirms the superiority of the German forces in Tunisia over those of the attacking enemy. Each ton of supplies which reaches its destination therefore means the prospect of a longer hold out in Tunisia. For this reason and as a matter of loyalty towards our troops, it is the duty of the German Navy to use every possible means of getting supplies through, even after the fall of the large ports. I shall do everything in my power to obtain this objective, and expect the same of you. You will report plans for the continued execution of the supply task."

(1/Skl 1365/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

III. The German Naval Command, Italy reports that it is in full agreement with the opinion of Naval Staff on the subject of reprisals against enemy hospital ships demanded by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South (Radiogram 1430).

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

It cannot be said with certainty that the submarine engaged in combat by the DRACHE on 5 May was destroyed.

Two submarine chasers returned to Piraeus after an unsuccessful submarine hunt. A submarine hunt with planes and surface vessels is in operation south of Chalkidike.

The motor vessel BARLETTA put in to Piraeus from Patras on 7 May.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Numerous medium-sized and small vessels were observed leaving Gelenjik, course west, in the evening of 7 May.

Own Situation:

Italian PT boats and motor minesweepers did not sight anything southeast of Gelenjik and off Feodosia or on the southern coast of Taman during the night of 6 May.

Three PT boats were operating off Tuapse, and two Italian PT boats off the southern coast of Taman in the afternoon of 7 May.

The submarine U "9" started on her return passage from the operational area because of fuel shortage on 6 May.

An unsuccessful submarine attack on the convoy DRESDEN took place off the southeast coast of the Crimea on 7 May. The depth charge attack was without success as far as could be observed. A mine-exploding vessel was attacked with bombs and aerial torpedoes off Eupatoria, slight damage was inflicted. One plane was shot down. Four naval landing craft towed the mine-exploding vessel into Sevastopol.

Minesweeping in the Kerch Strait was without success.

Motor minesweepers of foreign origin patroled the channel Kerch - Mariupol laying buoys.

The traffic in the Kerch Strait and to Anapa and Temriuk passed without any special incident.

Special Items.

I. Group South has informed the Reich Commissioner for Shipping (Representative Black Sea) and the High Command Quarters concerned of the transport requirements of the Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas, and bases on this the request for additional shipping. (Radiogram 2121).

II. Naval Staff, Operations Division issued instructions to Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch to transfer ten armed fishing vessels to the Black Sea at the expense of Naval Station Baltic. (Copy as per 1/Skl 11728/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

IX. Situation East Asia.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo states that in April Japan lost 25 ships totalling 10,800 BRT, for 19 of which submarines were responsible.

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Items of Political Importance.

Portugal:

The German Military Attaché in Portugal reports as a result of his tour of inspection that an active defense of the country is not intended. The troops are inadequately trained and only fit to quell riots within the country. In the event of an attack the leading parties expect Spain to defend the entire Iberian peninsula.

Italy:

The Naval Attaché, Rome has submitted his summing up on the question of Italy's capacity to hold out. The hope for a favorable outcome of the war has practically gone. The best troops were lost in Russia and Africa. The troops at home cannot be valued very highly either in their moral or technical powers of resistance. The material possibilities of protecting the islands and the mother country effectively against an invasion are slight. The air raids have left a deep impression on the civilian population. The air raid precautionary measures are inadequate and relief measures for those bombed out are lacking. The leaders of the Armed Forces and the government are being more and more severely criticized. The propaganda aimed at disintegration is cleverly making use of all elements of weakness for the incitement of the population. The mistrust of Germany is being nourished by reports on the generally derogatory treatment of Italian soldiers on the eastern front. On the other hand the fact must be taken into account that the Duce himself has confidence in the morale of the home front, that discipline within the Armed Forces is good, and that the characteristic qualities of the people, the ability to bear hardships, fatalism, and freedom from want will enhance their ability to hold out. In spite of all the tension the situation in Italy may be assessed as quiet, as the home front has shown itself proof against set-backs during the past two years. The Duce's health remains the decisive factor. Strong military assistance from Germany is of importance for the perseverance of the Armed Forces. (1/Skl 13447/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIII.)

General Situation:

The Russo - Polish controversy continues in renewed reproaches on the part of Poland against Russia because of the Polish armies transferred to Iran. Steps taken by the British and U.S. governments for the settlement of the conflict have so far been without result.

There have been further reports in the press confirming that the hurried construction of Liberty ships has led to certain short-comings.

Franco made a speech at Seville in which he emphasized the "non-belligerence" of Spain. His policy is a purely Spanish one.

The Swedish Foreign Minister, Guenther, stated in a speech on Sweden's policy of neutrality that it was not sufficient merely to proclaim neutrality. It would be necessary to defend it by force of arms, to defend the frontiers, and to prevent encroachments on that neutrality. It was just as imperative for a neutral power as for the belligerents to arm to the teeth. Guenther also defended the vital goods traffic with the belligerents, in which Germany naturally plays the largest part.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff: The three torpedo boats in Toulon will be transferred to Italy on 9 May. The deadline for the anti-aircraft corvettes has been postponed ten days because they were not quite ready.

II. The Chief, Organization and Mobilization Branch, Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division reports that General von Unruh plans a tour of the naval garrisons from Pillau to Wilhelmshaven. It is hoped to achieve more efficient employment of the supply services. General von Unruh has ordered that all submarine welders employed in the Army supply services are to be withdrawn. General von Unruh plans to report to the Chief, Naval Staff prior to starting on his tour.

III. Naval Staff, Operations Division, Foreign Affairs Section reports that Italy will shortly announce new war zones around the mainland and islands.

IV. Naval Staff, Operations Division, Foreign Affairs Section reports on the relations with the French Navy. The issue was raised by an Italian assurance to Laval that Italy agrees in principal to the re-establishment of a French Navy. Nothing was known beforehand in German quarters of this Italian step. Cooperation with the French Navy is necessary because it is the only way in which the recalcitrant shipyard laborers can be persuaded to work.

In view of the anti-British attitude of the French naval officer, one always meets with understanding if the military necessity is stressed and his honor left unimpaired.

A change is decernible in the relations between Italy and France. The Italians reduced their demands considerably and handled the French in Southern France very cleverly from a political point of view. As against that, promises made by the Germans have not been kept in several instances.

The French request to be allowed to hoist their flag on a ship, even if only on one of the ships partly sunk, simply as a symbol.

The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff underlines from his own knowledge of the conditions, the desirability of good relations with the French Navy.

The Chief, Naval Staff explains that the pro-German attitude in France in 1940 was due to the fact that at the time all power lay on our side. It is the firm conviction of a well-informed personality that in view of the fluctuating character of the people fair treatment and an accommodating spirit would only have developed later to our own disadvantage. At the present time our relations with the French Navy have been completely shattered as a result of the events in Toulon. We must derive the greatest benefit possible from France, but the psychological aspects will have to be taken into consideration. No special steps whatever can be taken in this matter by the Navy.

V. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports another telegram from Laval to Admiral Robert, ordering him to sink the gold and destroy the available planes. Admiral Robert replied to Laval's first telegram, (which was referred to yesterday) saying that for moral reasons he did not think the time had yet arrived for the scuttling of the ships. He felt himself master of the situation and would act correctly when the time came.

The Hungarian General Staff consider it of importance that Hungarian pilots should be used only against Russia, and not against Great Britain.

According to an agent's report, Lord Gort is said to have stated that Russia is apparently changing her methods of warfare and that she is not planning any further offensives. One should be prepared for an armistice becoming tacitly effective in Russia. The plans for an invasion of Europa, so greatly publicized by the Allies, were designed to mitigate Russian mistrust.

VI. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports that the increased courier plane service from Great Britain to Sweden is used mainly for the transport of ball bearings, as an important ball bearing manufacturing plant in Great Britain was destroyed during an air raid.

Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

VII. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports that the extension of the minefield "West Wall" in the North Sea has been completed as planned, and that Group North has requested permission to add three more minefields to the West Wall as it is now.

VIII. An aggravation of the situation is reported from Poland. There is unrest among the population because of the extensive recruitment of labor. Outbreaks of violence occurred in many places.

The Russian air raids on towns and cities in the East are proving most upsetting as there is no anti-aircraft artillery available for the protection of these places, and the air plane reporting service only covers these vast spaces very inadequately.

IX. Admiral Ruge reports that three war transport ships and one submarine are on their way to the Bon peninsula, that all naval landing craft in any way ready to sail have been mobilized for the passage to Tunis, and that the plan is to throw every small vessel available into the operation. (1/Skl 1366/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports on the distribution of the available PT boats. Naval Staff suggests that a new PT boat flotilla should not be transferred to the Mediterranean, and proposed instead that the transport capacity made available thereby be used for naval landing craft. The Chief, Naval Staff concurs with this suggestion and orders that for the present no further PT boats be transferred to the Mediterranean. (1/Skl I op 13435/43 Gkdos.)

Naval Staff points out in this connection that the PT boats in Norway are withdrawn from operations. These Norway boats must now have their engines overhauled and this can only be done in Germany. The Fuehrer will have to be informed of the transfer of the PT boats to Home Waters.

X. On the question of fighter escort for our convoys, the Chief, Naval Staff considers there is no point in taking the matter up with the Fuehrer at present, as he is fully aware of the air situation, and will have a suitable distribution effected when the necessary facilities become available.

XI. Naval Staff, Operations Division reports that the flight to the weather station "Holzauge" on Greenland cannot be carried out with a BV 138 as planned, but that the flight will have to be made this month or next. The Chief, Naval Staff rejects the use of a BV 222, which was withdrawn from most important commitments in the east for exclusive employment in the submarine war. The suggestion to use a Do 26 will be investigated.

XII. General Warlimont informed the Fuehrer of Vice-Admiral Ruge's request to militarize the personnel of war transport ships. The Chief, Naval Staff rejected this request made to the Fuehrer (as he had done previously to Admiral Ruge), as it is impossible to militarize all seafaring personnel at a moments notice.

It is to be opposed on organizational grounds, and, in addition, encroaches on the sphere of the Reich Commissioner for Shipping.

XIII. Naval Staff, Operations Division, Mine Warfare Section reports that the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West is not in a position to support a massed sailing of submarines with mine escort because of the limited forces at his disposal. Practical attempts at passing over the new British combination mines have revealed that the mine-exploding vessel is endangered by dull acoustics. In other words an escort vessel would have to precede the mine-exploding vessel for its defense, an arrangement which is impossible from the standpoint of available forces. The risk to the mine-exploding vessels will have to be taken. According to statements made by prisoners of war, the enemy is planting mines in narrow channels by means of target dive-bombing.

Special Items.

I. On 6 May Admiral Riccardi addressed a personal letter to the Chief, Naval Staff. In it he outlined the tremendous sacrifices made by the Italian Navy and merchant marine in the battle for Africa and how the enemy superiority at sea, but above all in the air, had ruined the success of all endeavors. Italy is facing new vital tasks for which the Navy would like to preserve at least a minimum of defense at sea. It is for this reason that the few cruisers and light units left cannot now be exposed to certain loss.

> In this letter the refusal to commit the last of the light units remaining to the Italian Navy is defended. All steps taken by the Germans in this matter have failed. The German command has always kept its obligation of loyalty to the troops fighting to the bitter end in Tunisia constantly in view and above all the strategic necessity of postponing the fall of Tunisia as long as possible, whereas Italy finds herself facing a direct threat to the mother country, and no longer expects a successful outcome of the Tunisian campaign.

The Chief, Naval Staff replied to the letter with the following telegram:

"Sir,

I thank you for your letter of 6 May, and have just received your telegram regarding German submarines in the Mediterranean. I wish to express my deep appreciation and reply as follows:

1. The German Navy is fully aware of the extensive commitment, the heroic struggle, and the heavy losses of the Royal Italian Navy in the battle for North Africa strategically so important. I am confident that history will record this battle in its full greatness. It was in full appreciation of the difficulty of the task that I asked you at the time to permit the participation of the German Navy in the battle for North Africa in fresh and determined cooperation.

2. The question of how long our troops in North Africa can continue to resist the enemy depends on comparatively small quantities of supplies. Their perseverance, however, is of the utmost strategic importance, because it will, above all, upset the enemy's future plans.

On the other hand, the naval forces at the disposal of the Axis powers could not prevent landings at other points because of the considerably greater strength of the enemy. As against that, they could, and still can, play a decisive part in the support of the Tunisian bridgehead, because any success accomplished in the supply effort is incomparably more important than combat and patrol activity in the western Mediterranean, where decisive results cannot be achieved because of the superiority of the enemy. For this reason I am even now convinced that every possible vessel must be pressed into the supply service to Tunisia, and I have ordered the operation of German forces accordingly. As long as there is still a single soldier of the Axis powers fighting in North Africa we must not leave him in the lurch.

3. For the same reason I have ordered the employment of one or two German submarines for transport purposes, even at the risk of the unavoidable loss entailed. In order to avoid a weakening of the fighting forces in the Mediterranean I have at the same time ordered the transfer of fresh submarines to the Mediterranean.

In sincere admiration and cordial alliance, I remain

Yours

Doenitz, Grand Admiral."

(1/Skl 1375/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch informs the Bureau of Naval Armament that naval landing craft, naval artillery lighters, naval supply lighters, and the engines required for these vessels must be allotted a priority rating in accordance with the vital status of these vessels in the war effort. Deferment of, and delay in the construction of these vessels must be avoided at all costs. (1/Skl 13523/43 Gkdos.)

Situation 8 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The PORTLAND received the following sailing instructions for the approach to the Sunda Strait:

1. Steer for point "Priel" via "Yellow Bruno". This point is situated 6 degrees farther north than "Pricke".

2. Naval Staff expects arrival at "Priel" on 19 May at the earliest. (See Radiogram 0710.)

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

According to an agent's report a convoy of seven transports carrying 11,000 men is due to leave Liverpool for Gibraltar on 10 May. It is said the escort will comprise 5 cruisers, 1 carrier, and 25 destroyers.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast Area:

SG "2" was seriously damaged by a ground mine off St. Jean de Luz. The boat is being towed into port.

Escort forces were unable to pick up the two damaged submarines because of the weather conditions.

Channel Area:

Storms caused serious damage in the harbor of Alderney. The harbor booms were damaged; the radar intercept station was damaged and put out of action.

Special Items.

Group West reports plan to reinforce the flanking minefields off Cherbourg (the closing of the minefield gap "Z"). The individual minefield sectors receive the keywords "Birke", "Ulme", and "Eiche". It is planned to lay the mines with torpedo boats. (1/Skl 1377/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

One mine was swept off Rotersand, one off Norderney, and one off Vlieland, as were two mines off Borkum. Escort duties in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out as planned. Fighters attacked a minesweeper, inflicting casualties.

Special Items.

Group North informs Naval Staff and the Air Force Commander, Central Section concerning new instructions with regard to demands for fighter escort. (1/Skl 13363/43 Gkdos.) For the re-organization of fighter escort see War Diary, Part A, 6 May.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance off Jan Mayen and Iceland was without result. During reconnaissance flights to the Faeroes several ships and a submerged submarine were sighted, also one ship of 3,000 BRT southeast of of Spitsbergen. The photographic reconnaissance of Kola Bay showed one submarine, four destroyers, two tankers, and 19 freighters.

Enemy air activity over the North Sea was slight, only two planes of the Iceland squadrons were on operations.

The Russian batteries on the Ribachi peninsula fired a small number of salvos on the fjord entrance to Petsamo on 6 May.

2. Own Situation:

One Russian submarine mine was swept north of Hammerfest and the area closed to shipping because of suspected mines.

Thirty-one ships were escorted north, and 22 ships south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Thirteen patrol boats were in position in Kronstadt Bay. Thirteen patrol boats, 5 minesweepers, and 1 repair ship were observed off Lavansaari, 1 patrol boat off Seiskari, 6 minesweepers and 3 patrol boats off Schepel. One of these minesweepers was damaged during an air raid. There has been enemy air activity by night and day in the area of Hogland - Tyters.

2. Own Situation:

Five steamers and two submarines were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic and 13 vessels were detailed to patrol the channels. One mine was swept off Copenhagen.

The minelayer OSTLAND is en route from Kiel to Swinemuende. One mine exploded in a fishing net in Lubeck Bay.

The leave transport Hongoe - Libau ran to sea-mine. The ships of the transport Reval - Jacobstadt are on their return passage in ballast.

Minesweeping in the "Warthburg" barrage and off Irben could not be carried out because of the weather conditions. "Seeigel 32" was reinforced according to plan. Two motor minesweepers and two coastal motor boats carried out minefouling off Lavensaari. An air attack was made on a minelaying formation in Kuporia Bay without inflicting damage.

Special Items.

Naval Station Baltic has issued instructions for counter-defense against the new enemy combination mines. Naval Staff, Operations Division considers one item of these instructions uncalled for and suggested to Naval Station Baltic that it be changed. (1/Skl 13432/43 Gkdos.)

V. Merchant Shipping.

1. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submits the checked monthly figures for April 1943 on the losses in enemy merchant shipping. According to this a total of 129 ships or 603,306 BRT were lost. (1/Skl 13544/43 geh. in War Diary, file "Foreign Merchant Shipping".)

Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division compiled a list showing the new constructions of enemy merchant vessels in excess of the number of ships sunk, and arrives at the conclusion that an increase of 450,000 BRT took place in April 1943.

2. The Bureau of Naval Armament submits a statement of the losses to the Scandinavian ore traffic. The losses in the ore traffic to the Rhine - Ruhr plants, to which about 70 % of the total import is being allocated, amounted to 37,000 tons in the first quarter of 1943, which would mean approximately 30 % of the total loss for the year 1942. The percentage of losses in relation to the quantity of ore shipped is 2.44, whereby increased shipping figures and a mild winter are to be taken into consideration when comparing with former years.

Because of the mild winter it was possible for the total ore shipments from Scandinavia from January to April to be increased to three times those made in the same period in 1942. In all 2,327,000 t of ore were shipped to Germany in the period January to April 1943.

3. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division has submitted a new edition of the "Compilation of all important secret special instructions (A.M.S. I.) so far known, issued by the Admiralty to enemy merchant shipping dated June 1942". For details see 1/Skl 13636/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XI.

4. A conference took place in the Ministry of Economics in which Naval Staff, Operations Division, Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division, and the Special Staff for Mercantile and Economic Warfare participated, in order to decide the exact status of Swiss merchant shipping in the case of an economic war with Switzerland. As a result of these discussions it was seen that an economic war and the cancellation of the agreement to protect Swiss merchant shipping would only be to Germany's disadvantage. The Swiss ships would sail without our control and knowledge, and could only be seized outside the operational area under prize law. In addition there was also the danger that the ships might pass over to the enemy. (1/Skl 13954/43 geh.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

An SOS call from a Panama ship 70 miles southeast of Pernambuco is presumably to be attributed to the success of one of our submarines.

2. Operations:

Groups "Rhein" and "Elbe":

From radio monitoring reports received yesterday it follows that the SC as well as the HX convoy received instructions to sail on courses running south of our submarine packs. The pronounced avoiding movement of the two convoys is extraordinary and so clear that it must be assumed that the enemy was aware of the position of the patrol line. As enemy interception of our patrol lines may not always be put down to location by enemy planes, the possibility of treachery must be equally taken into account. A break into our coding system is improbable. There is only one possibility of treachery therefore-insight into the chart with the submarine positions. A thorough investigation has therefore been ordered to see which offices absolutely require this insight for official purposes. Orders were also issued for a more frequent change of cypher.

As a result of the radio monitoring report giving the routing instructions of the two convoys, Groups "Rhein" and "Elbe" were shifted slightly to the south.

According to dead reckoning the SC convoy was due to pass the patrol line in the course of this evening.

The boats of Group "Drossel" will be detailed to operate against an SC or HX convoy following the breaking off of the present operations.

A westbound convoy already reported by a boat a few days ago, was intercepted by a boat southeast of Greenland. Four additional boats have been ordered to operate against it.

A boat which was seriously damaged by bombs in the Bay of Biscay yesterday has not been found despite a search by planes and boats. It will have to be presumed lost. In this way eleven boats have been lost this month.

A boat sank two steamers off Freetown. According to a report from this boat, the traffic in this area seems to run at a distance off shore by night.

Special Items.

Naval Staff, Submarine Division has submitted the submarine situation for 1 May 1943 (1/Skl 1370/43 Gkdos. Chefs.).

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

The 3rd Air Force had 18 planes operating in the western area, and six in the Mediterranean. London, Southend, and Reigate were attacked by one bomber apiece during the night of 8 May. No enemy planes flew over Reich territory.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

One hundred fifty four planes in all were operating within the command of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South. They were concentrated in support of the Army front, as far as it was possible, considering the crushing enemy air superiority. Eleven enemy planes were shot down by fighters, three by anti-aircraft artillery. Three of our own fighters were lost.

Three Spitfires and three Curtis were shot down during an attack by 100 Spitfires and Curtis in five waves on our own transports off Cape Bon.

Ninety nine enemy planes were shot down with the loss of four of our own planes on the eastern front on 7 May.

The Volga River was fouled by eight planes during the night of 8 May.

3. Northern Waters:

Fighter-bombers sank an enemy submarine off Polyarno on 8 May.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The transfer of landing craft from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean is continuing. Forty seven landing craft were observed putting in to Gibraltar in the course of 7 and 8 May. Twenty three of these vessels are said to have passed the Straits of Gibraltar for the Mediterranean during the night of 7 May, according to Spanish reports.

A new type of boat was observed without a collapsible bow, and fitted with three approximately 5 cm anti-aircraft guns and eight anti-aircraft machine guns. As regards large ships, the KING GEORGE, NELSON, and FORMIDABLE were in Gibraltar on 8 May. Since 7 May the NELSON has been flying the admiral's flag, and the KING GEORGE the rear-admiral's flag. The ADVENTURE returned to Gibraltar from the Mediterranean at noon on 8 May.

The British battleship HOWE is said to have left England for Gibraltar, according to an unconfirmed agent's report.

A German submarine reports three tankers and three submarine chasers off Cape Tenes. Air reconnaissance observed lively shipping on the North African coast. The photographic interpretation of the harbors of Oran, Arzeu and Bougie, Jijelli and Bone showed a large assembly of landing craft of all types.

Three enemy destroyers were reported south of Ibizza, course west, in the evening of 7 May.

Kelibia was shelled from sea in the evening of 8 May. No details have yet been received.

One enemy submarine was off Messina on 8 May.

The French submarine MARSOUIN was off the Balearic Islands on 2 and 3 May, according to the radio intelligence.

Reconnaissance over Crete and off Cyprus as far as the Levantine coast was without enemy sighting.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Two Italian boats were in the operational area.

The submarine U "380", which was designed for ammunition transport, is to make for Kelibia, where it is expected on 9 May.

The PT boats S "153" and "154" en route to Toulon had to turn about because of weather conditions, and put in to Messina. Two motor minesweepers and four auxiliary motor minesweepers are en route from Tunis to Trapani.

The 3rd PT Boat Flotilla could not be used for the discharge of the war transports between Pantelleria and Kelibia because of weather conditions.

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South reports as follows on the land situation on 7 May:

The battle in Tunisia continues with undiminished intensity. In a massed attack using his crushing material superiority the enemy enlarged the decisive penetration near Mateur and split our forces on the western front into two groups.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The discharge of war transports off Sidi Daoud has proved impossible. The war transports KT "5", "9", and "21" en route to Kelibia were subjected to eight severe air attacks. The war transport KT "21" is lying at anchor off Cape Bon after two bomb hits and is to be beached to save the cargo.

Four Italian naval landing craft, from which no reports of arrival had so far been received, reached Trapani from Tunis in the evening of 7 May. At the same time three Siebel ferries and four infantry landing craft arrived in Marsala from Tunis. The report of arrival from one Siebel ferry is still missing. The steamer BELLUNO (4,279 BRT) was damaged during an air raid on Tunis and had to be beached. The TOMASEO is en route to Catania, and the SAN PEDRO en route to Messina.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff requests the German Naval Command, Italy to report whether in view of the present situation the withdrawal of PT boats for dockyard repairs can be advocated. (Copy as per 1/Skl I a 13410/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. Naval Staff inquires of the German Staff attached to the Italian Admiralty whether the pointed containers (Spitzbehaelter) developed by the Air Force are being used for the fuel supply service to Tunisia (see Telegram 1732).

III. The hospital ship PRINCIPESSA GIOVANNI was put out of commission by enemy action on leaving Tunis. Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff supports the Italian Armed Forces High Command in their request for the use of the French hospital ship SPHINX, at present lying in Marseilles, as a substitute for this hospital ship. The Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas is to arrange for the ship to be made ready at once. (See Telegram 1840.)

IV. In the weekly review of the situation in the Mediterranean dated 8 May drawn up by Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division it is noteworthy that the shipping space available to the enemy is at present estimated at 6 troop transports totalling 100,000 BRT, 299 freighters totalling 1,300,000 BRT, and 37 tankers totalling 260,000 BRT. The number of landing craft consists of three LSI's, 74 LST's, 64 LCI's, 115 LCT's of 250 BRT, 61 LCT's of 120 BRT, 105 LCM's of a small cruising range, and of a large number of very small landing craft.

V. Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff has issued a directive for the continuation of the war in the Mediterranean. The directive is being transmitted to the Commander in Chief, Navy; the Chief, Army General Staff; the Chief, Bureau of Army Armament; the Army Personnel Department; the Commander in Chief, Air Force; the Air Force Operations Staff; with copies to Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas, and reads as follows:

1. The Fuehrer and the Duce are resolved to continue the battle in Tunisia as long as possible, even after the latest development in the situation. In addition, the far advanced enemy landing preparations in the remaining parts of the Mediterranean require that the German relief and defense units stationed on the Italian islands and mainland be supplemented and reinforced. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South will make the necessary arrangements within the scope of instructions issued by Armed Forces, High Command, Operations Staff.

2. The supplies of men and material to Italy will therefore have to be maintained in the present volume until further notice. Restrictions will require the Fuehrer's approval, and must be submitted through Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff. As regards transfers to Tunisia the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South will decide in accordance with paragraph 1, depending on the development of the situation.

3. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South is authorized to combine a number of units in accordance with the shortening of the front, and to withdraw the staffs released thereby to Italy. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South will appoint them for further duty. Requests from the High Commands of the Armed Forces for the evacuation of personnel and materiel are permissible in exceptional cases only and must be addressed exclusively to Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, and not to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South or the Army Group Africa.

(Copy as per 1/Skl 13468/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

A surfaced submarine was sighted off Iraklion in the morning of 8 May. An anti-submarine hunt is in progress. Small ship traffic on the north coast of Crete has been suspended. Platamon (Gulf of Salonica) was shelled by a surfaced submarine in the evening of 7 May. An anti-submarine hunt by planes and surface vessels is in progress. Small ship traffic in the Gulf of Salonica has been suspended.

Own Situation:

The motor vessel BULGARIA and a submarine chaser had to postpone the minelaying operation because of fog. The transfer of four troop transports to Rhodes has likewise been postponed because of fog.

Escort duties in the Aegean Sea were carried out as planned.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

The photographic reconnaissance of Poti showed the following: 1 battleship, 2 heavy cruisers, 4 destroyers, 2 torpedo boats, 2 minesweepers 10 submarines, 5 motor minesweepers, 16 PT boats, 15 steamers and 1 tanker. A tug with ships in tow and two coastal vessels were off Gelenjik on 8 May.

Own Situation:

During the night of 7 May two PT boats sank two coastal vessels of 600 BRT each, one coastal vessel of 500 BRT, and a lighter of 300 BRT out of a convoy between Tuapse and Gelenjik. Shore batteries took part in the engagement. No losses or damage to our own forces. Two PT boats operating southeast of Tuapse did not encounter any shipping. Italian PT boats did not sight anything on the south coast of Taman in the night of 8 May.

One Italian PT boat on leaving Feodosia on 8 May was rammed and seriously damaged by a naval landing craft. Coastal defense on the south coast of Taman will be carried out by two motor minesweepers in the night of 8 May.

Two tugs were unsuccessfully attacked by a submarine northwest of Eupatoria at noon on 7 May. The subsequent pursuit with depth charges was without any noticeable success.

Anapa was attacked from the air in the afternoon of 6 May, damage to buildings was caused. One assault boat was destroyed.

Ship "19" and the mine-exploding vessel "192" are en route from Feodosia to Kerch.

DT. CELENO and the steamer BALKAN arrived in Constanta from the Dardanelles on 7 May.

The transport of supplies and the ferry service across the Kerch Strait were carried out according to plan.

Special Items.

I. It is stated in a compilation on the sea transport performance in the Black Sea by Group South that it was possible to increase the performance by 100 % in April (see Telegram 2030).

II. Group South was informed by Naval Staff that the suggestion made by Group South regarding the Special Staff Scheurlen has been approved. It is a matter of transferring the Naval Shore Commander Caucasia to Kerch where he will take over the ferry tasks. (1/Skl 13821/43 geh.)

IX. Situation East Asia.

The Japanese Naval Attaché informs Naval Staff of a plan, which provides for the training of two German officers of the Naval Air Force at present in Japan for one month aboard a Japanese aircraft carrier.

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Items of Political Importance.

According to the "Daily Herald" the Allies have found themselves forced to convert numerous freighters into tankers because of the heavy losses in tankers.

In the morning of 8 May three merchant vessels in the Bay of Gibraltar had to be beached following heavy explosions.

The Naval Attaché at Istanbul has submitted a military report and a commentary on the Turkish press. The reports do not contain anything of particular interest. (1/Skl 13897/43 geh.)

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

I. The letter from Admiral Riccardi recorded in the War Diary, Part A, 8 May was followed up by a telegram from General Ambrosio to Chief, Naval Staff. It reads as follows:

"To Grand Admiral Doenitz -

Admiral Riccardi has already replied to the telegram which you sent him on 3 May, and which is the same as the one sent to me. I am in agreement with all that Admiral Riccardi stated. I wish to add that the Italian Armed Forces High Command cannot ignore the possibility of future offensive operations aimed directly at the Italian mainland when considering the commitment of every available weapon.

General Ambrosio."

(1/Skl 13539/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch issued temporary regulations to cover operational training with radar gear. (1/Skl 13528/43 Gkdos.)

III. The Chief, Surface Vessel Constructional Planning Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division has submitted the minutes of a conference, during which the Chief, Naval Staff was informed by the Chief, Naval Construction Division on 6 May of the most important ship types under construction. (1/Skl 13229/43 Gkdos.)

IV. A survey of the air raids during the month of March shows that considerable damage was done to the German war economy. However, the construction of submarines was in general not essentially impaired despite constant raids on the shipyards.

Situation 9 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Our Air Force sighted 24 steamers off Lowestoft and 12 off Margate in the evening of 9 May. Reconnaissance over the Bay of Biscay was lively, with 39 planes operating.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing special to report.

Special Items.

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West reports the deadlines for the completion of the anti-aircraft corvettes following an investigation into the situation at the shipyards in Marseilles. The delays in the deadlines are attributable to unforeseen incidents, as for instance damage to derricks. The readiness for sailing referred to in the deadlines can only be attained if training is cut down to the minimum. (See Telegram 2011.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance over Iceland, Jan Mayen, and the Faeroes observed

a merchant vessel off Iceland.

Our air forces attacked a destroyer south of the Kildin islands probably inflicting damage, and sank a submarine at the exit to Kola Bay.

A Russian patrol boat in a sinking condition was towed into Kola Bay in the evening of 9 May, according to radio intelligence.

A Russian destroyer left Yokonga during the night of 8 May, according to radio intelligence. Three Russian submarines were operating off the Arctic coast. One boat was leaving Kola Bay. Ten Allied freighters escorted by two British minesweepers and two corvettes left Ponoi during the night of 8 May.

No enemy reconnaissance was observed over the North Sea, ten planes of the Iceland squadrons were operating.

Russian batteries on the Ribachi peninsula fired on the entrance to Petsamo fjord in the forenoon of 7 May.

Own Situation:

Two more Russian submarine mines were cut off Rolfsoe. The area has now been re-opened to shipping.

A PT boat was 40 miles southwest of Marstein in the morning of 8 May according to uncertain observation from the air.

Twenty-three ships were escorted north and 15 south.

Special Items.

Group North reports that the disposition of submarines originally planned along the ice limit is unsuitable because of a pronounced shift of the ice, and that the boats would be disposed in the Bear Island Strait instead. (1/Skl 1380/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Minesweeping activity was observed off Kronstadt. Eighteen patrol boats were in position in the Sea Canal, eleven patrol boats off Lavansaari.

Oranienbaum and Kronstadt were completely covered by a smoke screen in the evening of 8 May. Nightwork on the MARAT was observed.

2. Own Situation:

Three tankers, four steamers, and two submarines were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Nine vessels and one magnetic minesweeping plane were on channel patrol.

The main net barrage extending from Nargoen as far as Porkalla - Kalbada has been completed in two rows. The "Nashorn" minefield "XI a" has been laid according to plan.

The minesweeping operations off Windau and Reval had to be canceled because of the weather conditions. Twenty boats were on guard against submarines behind the "Seeigel" and "Nashorn" minefields.

V. Merchant Shipping.

1. Naval Station Baltic requests Naval Staff to allot at least two fast vessels for escort of the ferries Sassnitz - Trelleborg. The Swedes likewise plan to put their ferries back in commission as soon as the German ferry boats start running. (See Telegram 1224.)

2. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division has submitted Short Report No. 7/43 on Foreign Merchant Shipping (1/Skl 14223/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part D, "Foreign Merchant Shipping".)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

A British minesweeper cleared two mines from a minefield off Casablanca which was laid by one of our own boats, according to a radio monitoring report.

2. Operations:

One boat of Group RHEIN made brief contact with the HX convoy reported by radio intelligence. The search for the convoy was unsuccessful.

The group had to be re-established in a new patrol line. Group "Drossel" has also been detailed to operate against this convoy, while Group "Elbe" is lying in wait for an SC convoy to arrive later.

Following the enlargement of the operational area in the area of Madagascar it had been planned to supply the type "IX D - 2" boats from a surface vessel which was to be ordered there from Japan. The arrival of the ship will not be possible until 18 June, according to the report from the Naval Attaché, Tokyo. This deadline is very late as the boats are just about arriving in the Cape region now and will presumably not be able to stay there five weeks without supplies, especially as the return passage must be guaranteed as well in the case of the non-arrival of the supply ship. A ship sailing in the same area on its passage to Japan should be in position to supply 300 to 400 cbm of fuel, and will be directed to a waiting area accordingly.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity.

Forty one planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating in the western area, four in the Mediterranean.

Medium strength incursion activity in the western area by day. Enemy planes flew over western France during the night, probably on minelaying missions off La Rochelle and St. Nazaire. No enemy planes flew over Reich territory.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Slight air activity over the Tunisian combat area by our fighters and fighter-bombers. The units of our own Air Force were transferred from the Tunisian area to Sicily and Pantelleria.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The ADVENTURE and five destroyers left Gibraltar for the Atlantic

on 8 May, six PT boats and six landing craft sailed from Gibraltar for the Mediterranean on 9 May. Air reconnaissance observed lively shipping and naval forces operating in the area between Cape Bon and Pantelleria. Three to four cruisers and several destroyers were observed in various positions.

The Air Force reports one freighter ablaze northeast of Cape Bon and another west of Marsala; these are probably our own war transports. The photographic reconnaissance of Algiers revealed four cruisers and five submarines in addition to numerous small vessels and landing craft, and that of La Valetta three cruisers, six destroyers, and five submarines.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four Italian submarines were in the operational area.

One of our own submarines fired a triple torpedo spread which missed its mark on a vessel proceeding alone in the western Mediterranean. The discharging of ammunition by the submarine U "380" had to be canceled because of the land situation in Tunisia. The boat received orders to jettison the ammunition as far as necessary, and to take aboard as many soldiers as possible instead. The boat then took aboard four soldiers as, according to their statements, only one complete company was still on land and wished to stay. A double torpedo spread fired on a destroyer group missed its mark.

The coast of Kelibia was shelled twice by enemy naval forces on the night of 8 May. The radar station at Kelibia was put out of action by bombs and shelling from the sea; the gear was blown up.

Palermo was heavily attacked from the air. Ships were not damaged. No other damage has yet been confirmed. Seven planes were shot down by fighters, three by anti-aircraft artillery. Six planes were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery during an attack on Pantelleria. Messina was severely attacked. Damage has not yet been reported except that to a large ferry. In the evening a second attack on Palermo took place causing slight damage.

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South reports on the land situation at noon on 8 May:

On 7 May the enemy succeeded in penetrating Bizerta, Ferryville, and Tunis with crushing superior forces against tough resistance. The 5th Panzer Army Command has been compressed in a narrow area near Bizerta. The bulk of the Army Group succeeded in breaking away from the enemy and setting up a new line of defense.

The German Naval Command, Tunisia reports that the entrance to Bizerta harbor has been blocked by 30 vessels as planned. All disembarkation facilities in Kelibia have been destroyed by air attacks. The attempt to board a war transport in Sidi Daoud failed because of the surf. Discharge of war transports in Sidi Daoud is not possible.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The war transport KT "9" was hit by bombs and stranded near Cape Bon. The war transports KT "5" and "21" which were standing off and on in the vicinity of Cape Bon despite heavy air attacks by day, disappeared at dawn without leaving a trace. The two ships were apparently sunk by destroyers.

The tug GABES with one officer and 30 men of the HERMES on board put in to Trapani from Tunis in the forenoon of 9 May. It has been planned to employ various small vessels for fuel transport and evacuation of men. It is considered possible that the small vessels may get through by night.

The remainder of the crew of the HERMES has joined the Supply and Transport Office Cape Bon.

Special Items:

I. Vice Admiral Ruge conveyed the following message by phone to Naval Staff, Chief of Operations Division at 1400 on 9 May:

The employment of large-sized ships for the supply service including war transports is no longer possible, as there is no prospect of getting through and discharge of cargo impossible. The latter also applies to submarines, according to the report from Captain Meixner. The supply transports have, therefore, been restricted to small vessels. The impression is that the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South has failed to recognize these compelling facts and is asking for the impossible. Towards 1700 a meeting is to take place between the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South and the German Admiral attached to the Italian Admiralty and the Chief, German Naval Command.

The Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff emphasizes that the decision of the Commander in Chief, Navy to go to the extreme limit of what is possible in the commitments for Tunisia, has once more been confirmed by the Fuehrer and the Duce and remains unchanged. The decision as regards the extent of the commitments will have to rest with the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, as a clear view of the situation in all its detail cannot be gained by Naval Staff in Berlin. It is Admiral Ruge's task as an expert to act as a counsellor to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South in accordance with the directives issued by the Commander in Chief, Navy.

Vice Admiral Ruge affirms that this is also his own opinion. He will inform the Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff in due course on the outcome of the discussion with the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South.

Shortly afterwards the Commander, Submarines, Italy conveyed the following message by phone:

As the discharging of liquid cargo in Tunisia is no longer possible, he has suspended the conversion of the three boats for use as fuel transports. In view of the fact that Captain Meixner has reported that the discharging solid cargo from submarines is also impossible, he considers it expedient to stop the loading of the two boats in Naples with gasoline cans, and to release these boats for operations as well. He requests a decision on this matter.

The Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff hopes a decision will be made when the outcome of the conference with the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South has become known.

Vice Admiral Ruge states that as the outcome of the discussions with the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South the latter has decided to restrict the supplies for Tunisia to small vessels under pressure of prevailing circumstances.

Vice Admiral Ruge requests that the submarine U "380" continues to be employed in the Tunisian operations, namely for the withdrawal of personnel, since it will be impossible to discharge the cargo as ordered; that the remaining five submarines, however, be placed at the disposal of the Commander, Submarines, Italy for immediate operation.

After informing the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff the following decision has been made by Chief, Naval Staff and transmitted as top priority telegram to the German Naval Command, Italy, the German Special Staff, the Commander, Submarines, Italy, with copy to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, Operations Division:

1. The three German submarines set aside for conversion into transports are not to be converted, but are to be placed at the disposal of the Commander, Submarines, Italy for operations immediately.

2. The two submarines lying in Naples set aside for the supply service to Tunisia are, for the present, to be held in readiness without being loaded, until the experiences made with the submarine U "380" are available.

3. The submarine U "380" is to be used for supplies or withdrawal of personnel, unless today's experiences prove this to be impossible. (Copy as per 1/Skl 13563/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. In reply to a request regarding dockyard repairs to PT boats (see War Diary, Part A, 9 May) the German Naval Command, Italy has reported that the directives of Naval Staff are being followed.

III. A Turkish military mission which returned from the North African theater of war summarizes its main impressions by stating that the British forces opposing the German forces were three times the size of the latter and had set up a tremendous supply service organization with very extensive motor transport facilities.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

An auxiliary sailing vessel was sunk by an enemy plane off Milos. Another auxiliary sailing vessel was sunk by an enemy submarine off Cape Stavros.

An anti-submarine hunt is in progress, but without results so far.

Three boats of the Coastal Defense Flotilla Attika remain for the patrol of the Trikkeri Canal. The rest of the boats are being withdrawn. The convoy traffic was without any special incident.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Several coastal and small vessels were in the area of Gelenjik in the forenoon of 9 May, according to air reconnaissance.

Own Situation:

There were no PT boat operations on account of weather conditions. There was an unsuccessful attack with torpedoes and bombs on the convoy of the tanker DRESDEN en route from Sevastopol to Yalta at noon on 19 May.

Ship "19" and the mine-exploding vessel "192" put in to Feodosia on 9 May.

The Kerch, Anapa, and Temriuk traffic was partially hindered by weather conditions.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing special to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

The Finnish Military Attaché in Washington reported that the production of war materiel in the U.S.A. is apparently much larger than the available tonnage. The planning of the Armament Council has been criticized as a result.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff:

The three torpedo boats completed in Toulon have arrived in an Italian port. The three anti-aircraft artillery corvettes will be ready to sail between 16 and 19 May but have been given three extra days to allow for final completion. The Chief, Naval Staff has agreed to this prolongation. The naval artillery lighters will be ready to leave Sevastopol on 10 May.

II. Naval Staff, Operations Division, Foreign Affairs Section reports that as regards the question of Italian consent to the building up of a French Navy, Laval asked the Italian General Davarna for a discussion of this subject after the Fuehrer had stated to Laval that this question were a purely Italian one. The various views on this question are being transmitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1/Skl I cd 13968/43 geh.

III. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff points out that the number of transports in the western Mediterranean has at present decreased from the customary quantity of 14 to 6, and reports on the great increase of landing craft in the Mediterranean which has taken place simultaneously.

The Turkish Foreign Minister assured the German ambassador, von Papen, that the pronounced good will displayed towards Turkey by the Allies would make no difference to her relations with Germany.

IV. Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

The Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division raises the question of whether the two commands in Italy - the German Naval Command and the German Staff attached to the Italian Admiralty - are now to be combined. The Chief, Naval Staff considers the time for such action has not yet arrived.

V. The Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff reports the Naval Staff's views as to how the naval forces can best be distributed after the fall of Tunis;

especially in view of the fact that following an occupation of Sicily a transfer of forces from the western Mediterranean to the Aegean Sea will no longer be possible.

The Chief, Naval Staff states that a decision on this point depends on what the Fuehrer decrees for the near future, and that such an order would form the basis for all further planning. The Chief, Naval Staff is of the opinion that a transfer of forces to the Aegean Sea would not be correct in case future operations once more necessitate a concentration of forces. This question is being put aside for the present.

VI. The following issues are to be discussed at a meeting on the conclusion of the Tunisian campaign.

A. Submarine Operations:

The question is to be raised whether a transfer of larger numbers of submarines to the Mediterranean would have brought any assistance to Tunis. The answer to this question should be in the negative. It is true that more successes would have been achieved, but at the same time the losses would have increased, and that in such a measure as would have made it impossible for the submarine arm to recover in the near future. Secondly, the loss of the shipping sunk in the Atlantic would have made itself felt to our disadvantage, and finally, a larger submarine fleet in the Mediterranean could not have prevented the fall of Tunis. In addition, an increase in the number of submarines would, above all, have found its limitation in the available dockyards and bases.

If the conversion of submarines for transport purposes had been approached earlier, it would have meant in turn a weakening in the number of combat submarines, and, as against the other transport facilities employed, the performance of the transport submarines would not have carried much weight.

B. Questions of Command:

There is no doubt that if the Italian forces had been under German command they would have represented a much greater asset. However, the political prerequisites and possibilities needed to extract more from the Italian war potential under German influence are unfortunately lacking.

C. Planning:

Defensive measures against possible future enemy operations must be given consideration. The Aegean Sea must be reinforced. This will be a question of bases, which are scarce in this area. It is to be investigated to what extent the Adriatic ports of Cattaro and Pola can be used.

Considering the difficult connection over land to Greece, it will be necessary to build up an adequate store of supplies and equipment there in good time. The Aegean question has to be dealt with in a far-sighted manner, as the enemy might succeed in the near future in blocking the Messina Strait. In this event Axis communications between the western and the eastern Mediterranean would be broken.

A pivot in the prosecution of the war is Spain. An occupation of Spain would bring us a great many advantages and cancel out the successes so far obtained by the enemy in the Mediterranean. However, the prerequisite for occupation is, in the first place, that Spain does not offer any resistance, and secondly that we enter with such forces as to guarantee the success of the operation. Without these conditions the occupation of the Iberian peninsula must not be undertaken. At present we have not the forces available, and it is very doubtful how Spain would react to our invasion after the fall of Tunis.

VII. In connection with the over-all problem of the war the Chief, Naval Staff emphasizes that the prosecution of the war against merchant shipping is accorded first place. An annihilation of Russia cannot be anticipated for the present. (Tr.N. This sentence originally ran: It would be Utopia to be believed that Russia can be annihilated.) Stalin cannot do without the land we took from him, and will again and again endeavour to regain it. It is a question of winning the battle of the Atlantic. The submarine war can be decisive, because the entire enemy war effort depends on his shipping.

The Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports on the plan of Group North to dispose the submarines in Northern Waters off Bear Island because of the pronounced shift of the ice limit. (See War Diary, Part A, 9 May.)

VIII. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff touches once more on the question of the employment of the Fleet supply ship HELA as a target ship for submarine training (see War Diary, Part A, 6 May). The Chief, Naval Staff emphasizes that the HELA must be released for this purpose, and that the demand for target and escort vessels will become greater in relation to the increase in the submarine construction program. For the present the SCHEER is to be used until such time as the Fleet Command have released the HELA.

Special Items.

I. In a personal letter to the Reich Minister for Armament and Munitions, Speer, the Chief, Naval Staff dispatched a draft of the Fuehrer's order for the increased construction of submarines and light naval forces, requesting Speer to countersign it. (1/Skl 13730/43 Gkdos.)

II. The Naval Command, Italy requested that the minelayers POMMERN and BRANDENBURG should ship 200 EMC/ANZ's each with 350 AT's for immediate use in the area of Sardinia.

These mines cannot be got ready in time. Naval Staff has therefore arranged for the minelayers to receive a priority delivery of 400 EMF's via Marseilles, and requests report on plans for the minelaying operation off Sardinia. (1/Skl 13595/43 Gkdos.)

III. Naval Group West has submitted plans for laying of protective minefields off the south coast of France. (1/Skl 1378/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

IV. The Naval (Ship) Construction Division reports that the anti-aircraft artillery corvettes in Marseilles are being made ready to sail with all possible speed, but however, considerably increased demands belatedly received from the 6th Escort Flotilla, have made the requested advance in the deadline very difficult. As the ships did not put to sea on the planned deadline, it was still possible for the requested work to be executed. (1/Skl 13643/43 Gkdos.)

V. The Bureau of Naval Administration informs the Naval Staff that the personnel situation in the coastal and air defense will not allow the establishment of any further units. In order to bring about a decision on personnel requirements, Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division has been requested to submit its requirements.

VI. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch submits the monthly report for the Navy for April 1943 (1/Skl 13609/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, appendix "Monthly Reports".)

VII. The Administrative Staff of the Executive Office of the Commander in Chief, Navy has sent the naval records to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, as requested for the final report on the North African campaign. (1/Skl 13727/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

Situation 10 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

Convoys of troops to Australia and planes to India have been reported from South Africa. The presence of an aircraft carrier in the middle of April has been reported from Capetown.

2. Own Situation:

It is learned from an Admiralty report that the blockade runner KARIN was probably seized and sunk 400 miles northwest of Ascension on 10 March. The place and date of capture had not hitherto been known.

It is planned to use the PORTLAND to supply submarines in the Indian Ocean, because the supply ship CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN operating from Japan will not arrive on time as a result of delays in the shipyard.

The PORTLAND will receive the following order: "For Captain only".

"1. Naval Staff plans to use the PORTLAND for submarine supply service.

2. You will, therefore, interrupt passage immediately and steer for grid square K J. Wait in grid square K J pending further orders.

3. As a result of this, arrival in Batavia will be delayed about four weeks.

4. If execution of the plan is not possible for reasons not known here, report reasons briefly."

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo reports that the Japanese, under pressure from Rome, have reluctantly approved the dispatch of the colonial depot ship ERITREA to Singapore for Italian transport submarines. The Naval Attaché, Tokyo is negotiating at present on the question of how to split up the field of activity of the German Etappe and the Italian Etappe, which has yet to be set up.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Radio intelligence located various British units outside the Bay of Biscay. Only one plane of the 19th Group was operating, apparently because of weather conditions.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

The floating torpedo battery "Brest" sprung a leak during a storm and is out of action.

Channel Area:

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

I. Group North Fleet has ordered the Commander, Destroyers to check the defects and criticisms raised in the exercise report of the 8th Destroyer Flotilla. The Commander, Destroyers reports in reply that it can be said already that the poor results are not attributable to faults in training or personnel, but to obsolete equipment, and inadequacy of the destroyers' radar sets when used against aerial targets. (Radiograms 1916 and 2130.)

II. Group North Fleet reports that it does not consider the operation of the PT boat flotillas in case of enemy landings expedient, as was suggested by Group West, Operations Staff in B.No. 1552/43 A III Gkdos. of 24 Apr.

Group North Fleet considers that in case of sudden enemy landings immediate decisions and independent actions will have to be taken by subordinate commanders, and suggests a general phrasing of the orders, as they have been issued for the command of Group North in Group North 300/43 Gkdos. Chefs. of 17 Mar.

III. Naval Staff has informed the subordinate commanders on the possible countermeasures against the new mine firing units, and has stated that the possibilities of the defense are restricted because of the shortage in vessels and equipment. It will have to be taken as a matter of principle that the escorted object is of primary importance and the minesweeping vessels must accept a certain risk. (1/Skl 13438/43 Gkdos.)

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West has directed the defense divisions under its command to report as soon as possible on the exercises with the new countermeasures, and has issued individual orders as to how the countermeasures are to be carried out. The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, West reports that the necessity of doing without direct escort arises from lack of forces, and that the transition to a relevantly increased channel patrol will have to be effected after adequate buoyage. (1/Skl 13629/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Naval Staff requests the Bureau of Naval Administration, River and Water Construction Division, and Naval Staff, Hydrographical Division to investigate the possibility of an improvement of the fairway off Dunkerque and Ostend and to submit their view on the matter. (1/Skl IIa 13321/43 Gkdos.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

No escort and patrol activity whatever because of weather conditions.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situations:

According to radio intelligence five Russian submarines were operating off the Norwegian arctic coast. Slight enemy air reconnaissance over the central North Sea; ten planes were operating in the Iceland region.

On 8 May the Russian batteries on the Rybachi peninsula fired on our small vessels. One motor minesweeper was hit by an unexploded torpedo.

Own Situation:

Five submarines are at present off Bear Island.

An air attack on a convoy took place north of Vardoe on 10 May, during which the steamer FEODOSIA (3,075 BRT) was hit by a bomb. Three enemy planes were shot down by fighters.

Shipping between Bodoe and Glomfjord was temporarily suspended on 9 May because of suspected submarines.

Twenty ships were escorted north and eleven south.

Special Items.

I. Naval Command, Norway announces a prescribed channel through the declared mined area in the Porsangerfjord (Radiogram 1539)

II. Naval Command, Norway requests that the minelayer BRUMMER be put at the disposal of Naval Command, Norway after completion of the boiler overhaul. (Radiogram 1800)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Baltic Sea:

Enemy Situation:

The photographic reconnaissance of **Lavansaari** of 9 May showed numerous small vessels in the harbor; on 10 May an increase in the patrol boats was noticed as against the preceding day.

Own Situation:

In the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic 1 steamer, 4 tankers, and 1 submarine were escorted, and 10 vessels were dispatched to patrol the channels. Two patrol boats and two of our own planes were dispatched to render assistance to a casualty at sea southeast of Kristiansand South.

A mine explosion was observed off Stubbenkammer. The destroyer Z "38" reports two mine explosions off Kahlberg; the area has been temporarily suspended from shipping. The training sailing ship DEUTSCHLAND with ships in tow dropped anchor off Memel.

A leave transport with 2,287 leave personnel on board put out of Libau for Hangoe on 10 May.

Reval Bay has been 100 per cent cleared of mines.

The anti-submarine patrol behind the "Seeigel" and "Nashorn" barrages is being carried out by 13 boats. The vessels were attacked by planes on 9 May. The mine task "Tiger I" had to be suspended because of weather conditions.

V. Merchant Shipping.

Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division has made a thorough investigation into the quality of the Liberty ships. The Liberty ships reveal a number of short-comings which effect above all the life-span of these ships - which is four years at the most. The repairs needed to these ships increase as time goes on and will lead in the end to a rise in the number of ships permanently out of commission. The ships were an obvious makeshift and will in time be replaced by the faster VICTORY ship which is said to have better constructional and sea-going qualities. (A report is contained in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XI.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

The Intelligence Center Portugal sends following report, based on

statements made by the U.S. Consulate in Lisbon: The preparations for a large-scale transport of troops to the Mediterranean have been concluded; anticipated ports and dates of departure are as follows: 19 May from Boston, 23 May from Newark and Hoboken, 31 May from Philadelphia. The cargo consists of troops, bombers, and tanks. The material is lying ready in the ports. Ports on the west coast of Africa will be called at.

2. Operations:

One boat of Group "Rhein" intercepted the expected HX convoy northwest of the Azores. As the convoy had already passed the patrol line of Group "Rhein", Group "Drossel" was detailed to operate against it. A special radio monitoring report confirmed that the subsequent SC convoy is using the southern route. The newly formed Groups "Elbe I" and "Elbe II" are to operate against the latter. Two new Groups "Isar" and "Lech" are being established southeast of Greenland. Following the discovery of traffic off Cape Hatteras three boats will be ordered to operate there. One boat sank a freighter of 5,000 BRT west of German Southwest Africa.

Special Items.

I. The Commander, Submarines, Italy reports the efficiency of the submarines in April 1943. The total of ships sunk are:

9 ships equaling 75,956 BRT
1 FIJI class cruiser, and
1 destroyer of the TRIBAL class.

(1/Skl 13519/43 Gkdos.).

II. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division has compiled recent enemy commentaries on the submarine war.

(For details see 1/Skl 13444/43 geh. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.)

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Eighteen planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating in the western area, seven in the Mediterranean. One plane carried out a harassing raid on Brighton. There was slight incursion activity over the western area and the Reich territory by day, none by night.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

One hundred and twenty planes were operating in the area of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South.

Bone was attacked in the evening of 9 May; several hits on ships and in the harbor were observed. Jijelli was attacked in the evening of 10 May; no reports on successes have yet been received.

Air reconnaissance in the eastern Mediterranean was without result.

In all ten enemy planes were shot down.

3. Eastern Front:

The score of planes shot down on 9 May was 4 : 41.

Twenty-five boats were annihilated by anti-tank squadrons with 6 cm guns between Temriuk and Jeisk on 9 May. The River Volga was mined again during the night of 9 May. A burning tanker was observed, a success possibly due to mines. Fifteen minesweepers were operating on the Volga.

4. Northern Waters:

Fighter-bombers sank one steamer of 1,500 BRT on 9 May and a submarine on 10 May in Kola Bay.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

On 9 May a convoy coming from the Mediterranean passed Gibraltar, nine freighters branched off to Gibraltar, eleven joined the convoy from Gibraltar. Two battleships and one carrier were lying in Gibraltar at noon on 10 May, other ships in the harbor as usual. Twenty-one tank landing craft left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean in the afternoon of 10 May. Ceuta was passed by thirteen transports in the direction of the Mediterranean in the evening of 10 May. Air reconnaissance observed 10 corvettes, 5 barrage balloon carriers, 14 landing craft, and 6 PT boats off Bone. Six destroyers were repeatedly reported in the sea area off Linosa, and three destroyers off Pantelleria.

The coast near Sidi Daoud and Kelibia was shelled from the sea and attacked from the air during the night of 9 May. There were numerous sighting reports of cruisers, destroyers, and a convoy of four ships and five patrol boats off Cape Bon.
Possibly a west - east convoy is expected.

A submarine was sighted off Corfu on 9 May.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four Italian submarines were in the operational area.

The submarine U "380" received orders to start on her return passage to Spezia. In this way all submarines which were destined for transport to Tunisia are once more back on operations.

Three boats of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla put out for Cape Bon in the evening of 9 May. It was impossible to make contact with the shore because of the seaway and lack of disembarkation facilities. The boats took along two officers and put in to Empedocle in the morning of 10 May without having contacted the enemy. Two Italian PT boats were dispatched to Kelibia and Sidi Daoud. Details have not yet been received.

During the night of 9 May all boats off Kelibia were damaged and made unserviceable by continuous air attacks. The Chief, Naval Command, Tunisia kept us informed of destruction of secret matter and vehicles and the assignment of soldiers to Army units. He signed off at 1056 on 10 May with "Hail to the Fuehrer and to Germany" and made a final signal at 1437 reporting the evacuation of Soliman. Thus all communication with the naval units on Cape Bon has been broken.

Trapani was attacked by heavy air forces at noon on 10 May. No reports on damage have yet been received. At the same time Pantelleria was bombed by a strong formation of planes. Here, too, the reports on damage have still not come in.

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South reported on the land situation at noon on 9 May as follows:

Greatly superior tank forces breached the lines near Bizerta as far as the coast and penetrated Porto Farina. The last report from the remnants of the 5th Panzer Army reads as follows: "In loyal devotion to their duty the last combatants of the 5th Panzer Army salute their Fatherland and Fuehrer. Long live Greater Germany."

An attack with strong tank forces against the mountain position of the German Africa Corps was repulsed save for the loss of one elevation. On the southern front an enemy attack near Enfidaville was frustrated.

Owing to the loss of the ports, the enemy's command of the sea and crushing air superiority it is not possible to supply the Army Group with anything like appreciable quantities of ammunition and fuel. The Army is therefore already practically immobile. Its ammunition stocks are almost exhausted. They can therefore only hold out for a very limited period of time regardless of their exemplary fighting spirit.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South ordered the suspension of seaborne and evacuation transport at noon on 10 May following a discussion with the Armed Forces High Command and the Army Group Africa. The small vessels are being switched over to the carrying of supplies to Pantelleria and to withdrawal from there for the present. The PT boats are to be used as a flanking defense for this traffic.

(Copy as per 1/Skl 13679/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

The war transport KT "9" was completely sunk as it was too seriously damaged.

A group of Siebel ferries en route to Tunisia has not arrived there so far. Their whereabouts are uncertain at present.

Four Siebel ferries, three infantry landing craft, and a German naval landing craft left Marsala for Sidi Daoud in the evening of 9 May.

The following have so far arrived in Trapani from Africa:

Two tugs, several auxiliary motor minesweepers and harbor defense vessels. On board ship there were two officers, 25 NCO's and 1,500 men. An over-all survey of vessels which have returned to other places has not yet been received.

The hospital ship VIRGILIO arrived in Kelibia and the hospital ship AQUILEIA in Trapani from Tunisia.

The whereabouts of the war transports KT "5" and "21" is still doubtful. A burning ship, presumably one of the war transports, was sighted in the Straits of Sicily during the night of 9 May.

Special Items.

I. On request of the Deputy for the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping, Mediterranean, the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff has approved the transfer of shipping no longer required in the western Mediterranean to the Adriatic, Aegean and Black Seas. He points out that it is necessary to keep reserves for the shipping required for the supply of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. (Copy as per 1/Skl 13690/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. The German Naval Command, Italy reports that two Italian Leros submarines will operate in the sea area Tripolis - Benghazi, in accordance with the German suggestion (1/Skl 1393/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIII.)

III. In reply to the inquiry regarding the Air Force pointed fuel containers (see War Diary, Part A, 8 May) the German Special Staff reports that eight containers are available in the Italian area, but that they were not used in the Tunisian traffic, as they can only be towed in an absolutely calm sea at a maximum speed of 6 to 7 knots. (1/Skl 13529/43 Gkdos.)

IV. The German Naval Command, Italy and the German Special Staff have been informed by Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch of the Commander in Chief, Navy's plan to approach the Italian Admiralty at an opportune time with the request to let the German Staff attached to the Italian Admiralty exist in its present form and to have the post of the Chief of the German Staff filled by the Chief, German Naval Command, Italy, combining both in one person. Preparations as regards organization and personnel are to be made and suggestions submitted. If the Italians should take the initiative, the matter should be handled accordingly. (1/Skl 13738/43 Gkdos.)

4. Area Naval Command South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

An auxiliary sailing vessel was unsuccessfully attacked from the air off Euboa on 8 May. The harbor of Livadi was bombed and machine-gunned on 9 May.

Own Situation:

The anti-submarine hunt in the northern Aegean Sea and off Crete has been without success so far.

The Spanish steamer SAN EDUARDO (320 BRT) was sunk by planes off the isle of Serifos at noon on 9 May.

The operation against rebels near Mount Olympos and in the area of Volos has been concluded.

The troop-carrying motor vessel BARLETTA put in to Leros. All other escort duties were carried out without incident.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to air reconnaissance, there was slight shipping activity off the Caucasian coast on 10 May. Four submarines were operating in the Black Sea, according to radio intelligence.

Own Situation:

The submarine U "9" returned to Constanta from enemy patrol on 10 May. A report has not yet been received.

The 1st PT Boat Flotilla was on operations off Tuapse during the night of 10 May; no detailed report has been received. The three naval artillery lighters were unable to leave Sevastopol because of weather conditions.

Three motor minesweepers, four motor minesweepers of foreign origin, the mine-exploding vessel "192", and two non-contact firing boats left Kerch on 10 May for the dock transport to Mariupol.

The Naval Operational Staff has handed over its duties to the Shore Defense Commander, Caucasia.

The Kerch, Anapa, and Temriuk transports ran to schedule.

Contrary to the report of 8 May it was not the steamer BALKAN but the steamer BURGAS (2,149 BRT) that arrived with the CELENO in Constanta on 7 May.

Special Items.

Group South has informed the Commanding General in Serbia that reinforcement of the river defense group EISERNES TOR is not possible owing to shortage of vessels and because escort duty in the Black Sea is accorded priority. (1/Skl 13515/43 Gkdos.)

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

It has been learned from an Italian source that military airfields and seaplane bases are being improved on the Azores. The impression prevails that the British and Americans are exerting pressure on the Portuguese to repair these air bases. It is not yet known when they will be taken over by the enemy powers.

Shortly after an R.A.F. General's visit, the British Naval Attaché at Stockholm stated that the shipping losses are so considerable that something will have to be done to give the war a different turn. In Great Britain it is said that the war can now only be won by the Air Force. Germany would have to be attacked from the air day and night regardless of losses. In addition, American and British planes must be based in the east so as to be able to bomb German cities and towns from that direction as well.

A large number of American transport planes completed a flight to India, having crossed the Atlantic carrying a cargo of 90 tons, according to a broadcast from London. Twin-engined planes were used on this occasion.

The British Admiralty announces the loss of the British destroyer PAKHAM, which had been operating off North Africa.

In a speech at Almeria General Franco said the war had come to a deadlock, and none of the belligerents had the strength to annihilate its opponent completely. In this speech Franco appealed to the belligerents to make peace.

Secretary of State Hull commenting on Franco's speech said that the one aim and object of the Allied nations was the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff has submitted a chart which Group West prepared with regard to landing possibilities on the south coast of France and the defenses existing there.

The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that the three naval artillery lighters left Sevastopol on 11 May.

II. Foreign Affairs Section, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports that a Portuguese steamer was destroyed by an enemy submarine off Corsica. An investigation revealed that the steamer carried Italian war materiel consigned to Portugal

on board. Details of the steamer's cargo were reported by the Naval Attaché, Lisbon. The Armed Forces High Command has been informed of the matter.

III. The Chief, Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Ordnance Division reports that he has been appointed a member of the newly established Armament Council and will in this way be able to enter into personal contact with Minister Speer at any time. It is reported in connection with the iron allocation fixed in the Central Plan that it was impossible to meet the increased naval requirements because of lack of material.

The Chief, Naval Staff will report to the Fuehrer that he has ordered the new construction program to be put into force irrespective of the iron allocation.

IV. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that the Army General Staff considers the letters found on the British courier who crashed over Spain authentic, and that the invasion plans set out therein are quite possible both as regards place and forces to be employed.

In a conversation with the German Military Attaché the Spanish Minister of War stated that Spain is resolved to defend herself against any invasion. No concrete answer was given to the question about Spain's reaction to an invasion of Portugal.

V. Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports that two Leros submarines will operate off Benghazi. (See War Diary, Part A, 10 May.)

VI. A suggestion made by Naval Staff to approach the Italian Admiralty regarding the further manning of French torpedo boats with German personnel, has been rejected by Chief, Naval Staff. This matter is not to be touched upon for the present, only the German Special Staff is to be informed that the Naval Staff attaches importance to the continued manning of the boats with our own personnel.

VII. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division states that there is as yet no clear data on the losses incurred in naval forces and planes in Tunisia, and reports instructions from the Armed Forces, Operations Staff regarding the transfer of the shipping space not required in Italy to the Aegean Sea. (See War Diary, Part A, 10 May.)

VIII. Naval Staff, Operations Division, Auxiliary Cruisers Section explains the preparations made for the supply of the submarines operating in the Indian Ocean. It was originally planned to use the tanker BRAKE but this had to be replaced by the CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN because of engine trouble. The CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN cannot be in the supply area at the planned time because of delays in the shipyard. Naval Staff therefore decided to stop the Japan-bound blockade runner PORTLAND in the Indian Ocean and use her for supply tasks until the arrival of the CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN. The PORTLAND can hand over from 300 to 400 t of fuel to the submarines. The relevant orders have been issued. (See memorandum in War Diary, Part C, Vol. I.)

IX. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff announces a report from Group West explaining how the assembly of the anti-aircraft corvettes in Toulon was delayed by numerous unforeseen incidents.

Special Items.

I. The Chief, Naval Staff called on the Fuehrer in the afternoon for a discussion on future plans in the Mediterranean Theater.

The Fuehrer plans to hold Sardinia with all forces available. At present the German forces there are very weak. The Fuehrer considers an occupation of Sicily less likely.

The Chief, Naval Staff emphasizes that under these circumstances not a single hour ought to be lost before the counterdefense becomes too strong, and points out that a timely reinforcement of Tunis might have helped. The Fuehrer stresses that the request for transport submarines in the Mediterranean referred principally to Italian boats. The German boats, being of greater fighting strength, are to carry out combat commitments. The Fuehrer desires the speediest possible assembly of the anti-aircraft corvettes. The Chief, Naval Staff suggests that he, himself, fly to Rome, in order to initiate all preparations with Admiral Riccardi as quickly as possible and also to clear up the recent differences of opinion.

The Fuehrer concurs with this plan.

II. Naval Staff, Operations Division informs Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division and Naval (Ship) Construction Division that it withholds the right to decide on the operation and use of the Norwegian torpedo boats. Naval (Ship) Construction Division had suggested that the boats should be assigned to the training units of the Commanding Admiral, Submarines. Copy as per 1/Skl I op 13659/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. d.

III. Naval (Ship) Construction Division has submitted the warship construction plan for the next twelve months which was drawn up on the basis of the situation in early April 1943. (1/Skl 12392/43 Gkdos.)

Situation 11 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The OSORNO, the first of the three blockade runners which put to sea on 29 Mar., reached the Sunda Strait on 10 May.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance sighted 28 ships off Orfordness, among them six destroyers, six to seven minesweepers engaged in minesweeping off Great Yarmouth, and a convoy of seven ships in the St. George's Channel. Thirty five planes were intercepted by radio intelligence and several located off the Bay of Biscay.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast Area:

The tug PFALZBURG is overdue. She was last sighted off the minefield gap of La Pallice on 7 May. Searches have so far been without result.

Five ground mines were swept off the Gironde.

Channel Area:

The batteries GROSSER KURFUERST and TODT shelled enemy shipping targets at noon and in the evening. No hits were observed.

The 2nd Torpedo Boat Flotilla transferred to Cherbourg.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

No minesweeping activity because of weather conditions. The escort duties were carried out as planned. The 1st and 7th Minesweeper Flotillas are being transferred from Cuxhaven to Rotterdam, the 26th Minesweeper Flotilla from Flushing to the West.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance intercepted 2 patrol boats, 1 merchantman, and 2 guard ships off Murmansk, and 1 merchantman and 3 escort vessels off the Ribachi Peninsula.

Moderate air activity was found over the North Sea, six planes in the Iceland region.

A large convoy is said to have left the U.S.A. bound for Murmansk on 7 May, according to a report from the Legation at Stockholm.

Planes are reported to have flown over Petsamo, Banak, and Sola on 10 May.

Own Situation:

The steamer FEODOSIA which was damaged during an air attack, had to be beached.

Three additional submarines have been detailed to join the five submarines operating off Bear Island.

Twenty one ships were escorted north and 19 south.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff requested the Commander in Chief Air Force, Operations Staff in 1/Skl 1385/43 Gkdos. Chefs. to detail a DO 26 for the flight to the meteorological station "Holzauge". The Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff has approved this request (see Telegram 2245).

II. Naval Staff approached the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff requesting him to assign planes fitted with ship's search gear to air force units operating in the Arctic region, in order to combat the Russian submarines

stationed off the Arctic coast. The Naval Command, Norway and Group North, Fleet have been informed of this step taken by Naval Staff. (1/Skl 13660/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Five guard ships were at sea off Lavansaari on 11 May.

2. Own Situation:

In the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses Baltic, 8 steamers, 3 torpedo boats, and 2 submarines were escorted and 6 vessels were detailed to patrol the channels.

The ferry service Copenhagen - Malmoe will be resumed on 12 May. Acts of sabotage caused a large conflagration in a shipyard at Svendborg, in the course of which predominantly German material was burnt.

One EIM/JA was salvaged and rendered inactive from a crashed plane near Rixhoeft.

Nineteen vessels were assigned to anti-submarine patrol behind the minefields "Seeigel" and "Nashorn". The minefield "Nashorn XII a" was laid according to plan. Further minelaying and sweeping had to be canceled because of weather conditions.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff informs the Naval Station Baltic and the Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic that, following the completion of the main minefields in the Gulf of Finland, it considers the submarine menace in the Baltic only slight at present, and that, therefore, the 25th Minesweeper Flotilla and the large minesweepers are to continue operating on the "Warthburg" minefields contrary to the request of the Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic. The complete clearance of the "Warthburg" minefields is to be aimed at. (See Telegram 1712.)

II. The Swedes swept 60 mines on the eastern fringe of the submarine barrage in the Kattegat, according to information from the Swedish Naval Attaché. Naval Station Baltic and the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic are being requested by Naval Staff to investigate whether and to what extent the barrage will still be required, and whether it can be left to the discretion of the Swedes to make a 100 per cent clear sweep in a safety line of 1,000 to 2,000 m off their territorial waters. (See Telegram 1713.)

III. Naval Station Baltic gives information on the new designations given to warship channels in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic (see Telegram 1758).

IV. The Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas requested the transfer of the front control office for leave personnel from Reval (Tallinn) to Baltic Port. No decision can be made by Naval Staff, Operations Division until the Commanding Admiral, Baltic Countries and Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic have expressed their viewpoints. (1/Skl 14334/43 geh.)

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

British and American broadcasting stations announce that five German submarines were sunk in the course of the last great convoy battle early in May, that is to say two boats are said to have been rammed by escort vessels, one sunk by gunfire, one destroyed by depth charges, and the fifth destroyed by means of a new secret anti-submarine weapon.

Actually six boats were lost in combatting this convoy. Judging by what was said concerning the manner in which these boats were destroyed, it can be assumed (as we had already done) that they were surprised during the poor visibility and were unable to withdraw fast enough from the defense.

2. Operations:

Groups "Elbe I" and "Elbe II" intercepted the expected SC convoy northwest of the Azores and have so far sunk two ships totalling 9,000 BRT. The weather is unfavorable, westerly winds 8 to 9, seaway 8, alternating visibility.

Group "Drossel" intercepted the HX convoy north of the Azores sailing under strong air cover. So far two ships totalling 17,000 BRT have been sunk. Here, too, the weather conditions are unfavorable. The new Groups "Inn" and "Iller" have been linked up with the Groups "Isar" and "Lech".

The submarine U "663" which was bombed in the Bay of Biscay a few days ago has not reported since in spite of repeated requests to do so, and will have to be regarded as lost. West of the Bay of Biscay one boat became unable to dive as a result of bombs.

Special Items.

Naval Staff, Submarine Division submitted an action report from submarine U "172" covering an engagement with two planes in the Bay of Biscay. It is noteworthy that the boat succeeded in repulsing the frequent air attacks by a clever use of all weapons.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

One hundred and sixty five planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating in the western area and four in the Mediterranean.

Great Yarmouth was attacked by 20 fighter-bombers in the course of the day. The convoy channel between the Humber and Thames River was fouled with mines by 36 planes during the night of 11 May; five planes failed to return.

The incursion activity by day in the western area was of medium strength. There were no attacks during the night, no planes flew over Reich territory.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Roughly 160 planes were operating in the area of the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South. Supply missions can only be flown by night by isolated transport planes risking heavy losses.

Eleven enemy planes were shot down at a loss of one of our own.

Jijelli was attacked during the night of 11 May. No report on successes has yet been received.

The increased activity in the Aegean Sea which has become noticeable since about a week ago, may be taken as a systematic armed reconnaissance of territory in which the enemy is endeavoring to gain an exact insight into the situation as regards bases and shipping etc.

According to the photographic reconnaissance of 11 May, the auxiliary aircraft carrier and landing transports are no longer in Alexandria.

3. Eastern Front:

Fifty-four enemy planes were shot down at a loss of nine of our own on 10 May.

Fourteen boats including a large armed patrol boat were sunk in the Sea of Asov on 10 May. The Volga River was once more fouled with mines during the night of 10 May. Fifteen motor vessels with towing gear were observed on the Volga. Air reconnaissance observed heavy shipping on the Volga on 11 May including no less than ten tugs with ships in tow, totalling 80,000 BRT.

4. Northern Waters:

On 10 May six FW 190's sank one merchantman of 3,000 BRT east of the Ribachi peninsula. On 11 May, one steamer of 800 BRT was damaged by fighter-bombers off Murmansk.

Special Items.

In agreement with Naval Staff, Operations Division the Inspector to the Air Force General attached to the Commander in Chief, Navy states that the development work on the aircraft model AR 231, which was originally designed for large submarines, will be suspended. The test models did not prove satisfactory.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The German Embassy at Madrid reports from reliable Spanish sources that an enemy offensive against Sardinia and Corsica must be expected soon.

At noon on 11 May one small convoy put out from Gibraltar and another one put in.

Tres Forcas sighted 23 landing craft steering east in the morning of 11 May. Moderate shipping was observed off Philippeville and Jijelli.

In the forenoon of 11 May six destroyers were sighted between Cape Bon and Hammamet, and towards noon five destroyers off Linosa. Pantelleria reports three unidentified vessels west of the island in the afternoon.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four Italian submarines were in the operational area.

At present only one of our own submarines has taken up position in the western Mediterranean.

Naval Staff has confirmed the telephone instructions from the Chief, Naval Staff concerning the transfer of submarine U "380" as combat submarine for operations with the Commander, Submarines, Italy, the German Naval Command, and the German Special Staff (1/Skl 13785/43 Gkdos.).

Three Aegean boats in Naples are ready to be ceded to the Commanding Admiral, Aegean.

A bombing raid on Marsala at noon on 11 May caused serious damage to the harbor and town.

The hospital ship LAURANA, which put out from Trapani on 10 May, was ordered by an enemy destroyer to call at Sousse to be searched. No further reports have been received. The hospital ship VIRGILIO, on her return passage from Kelibia, is due in Naples on 11 May.

The land situation is as follows, according to the report from the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, at midday on 10 May: The enemy is continuing his attacks with greatly superior tank forces, penetrating via Soliman to the Bon peninsula. It was possible to bring isolated enemy attacks to a halt near Depienne and Zaghouan.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The Director of the Shipping and Transport Office Cape Bon reported during the night of 10 May that they had no means with which to destroy the war transport KT "5". The radar station Kelibia reported at 0300 on 11 May that secret matter and radio gear would be destroyed at 0600.

The missing Siebel ferry groups had put in to Pantelleria because of the weather conditions during the night of 9 May. Two other groups bound for Sidi Daoud arrived at Pantelleria at noon on 10 May. One Siebel ferry and one naval landing craft sank there as a result of bomb hits.

One infantry landing craft carrying the Bizerta Port Commander, 31 men, one officer, and two offcials of all three armed services reached Trapani on 10 May.

Special Items.

The Armed Forces, Operations Staff has consented to a suggestion made by the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South and the Deputy for German Sea Transportation in the Mediterranean that the ships referred to should be used for the supply of Sardinia and Sicily. A transport association between the Commanding General,

Armed Forces, South and Italy will have to be established which will report to the Armed Forces, Operations Staff, when adequate small vessel shipping space is available for the supply of the islands, acting as substitute for large vessels. (See Telegram 2015.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

An auxiliary sailing vessel was attacked by enemy planes off Milos.

Own Situation:

The Commanding Admiral, Aegean has decreed that because of the increasing enemy air activity all sailing vessels are to be directed so that passage in open sea takes place only between 1700 and 0700, and that by day the vessels, if possible, are to keep under cover of land.

Special Items.

Naval Staff inquires of Group South and Commanding Admiral, Aegean whether any new reports have been received since 31 Mar. on the supply situation for Crete or new demands for same (see Telegram 1711).

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

The photographic reconnaissance revealed the following:

At Batum: two heavy cruisers, 1 light cruiser, 4 destroyers, 8 submarines, 4 motor minesweepers, 8 PT boats, 6 tankers totalling 40,000 t, 2 passenger steamers totalling 13,000 t, 9 steamers totalling 23,000 t, 1 ice-breaker, 24 coastal vessels.

At Ochemchiry: five submarines, 3 motor minesweepers, 2 freighters totalling 3,000 BRT.

The other ports showed little change.

At Gelenjik: 16 motor minesweepers were counted.

An air raid on Feodosia in the morning of 11 May resulted in major damage to buildings in the harbor and town.

Own Situation:

Our own and Italian PT boats and coastal defense boats operating during the night of 10 May did not sight anything and returned to their bases. Two PT boats were bombed off Novorossisk without sustaining damage. The commitment of Italian PT boats planned for the evening of 11 May had to be canceled because two boats had engine trouble.

The submarine U "9" reports no successes during her last enemy patrol.

The three eastbound naval artillery lighters were attacked without success by a submarine off Yalta. The boats put into Yalta because one naval artillery lighter had engine trouble. The dock convoy left Mariupol in the afternoon of 11 May. The ferry service and supply transports ran to schedule.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The Japanese Naval Attaché, Rome reported his impressions gained during conversations with personalities who had just arrived from Japan. Noteworthy is the rationing of all consumer goods, which is attributable to the shortage of shipping in the Japanese sphere of influence. There is a shortage of iron and aluminum. The morale of the Japanese people is said to be excellent. The fighting on the Solomon Islands is reported to be extremely fierce. Losses in our own heavy forces comprise, as announced, 1 battleship, 3 carriers, and 2 heavy cruisers. Except for the battleship, the annihilation of these ships is put down to fire. The battleship received a fatal hit in the steering gear and was lost as a result of the consequent unmaneuverability.

Naval Staff transmitted sailing instructions for the arrival of the expected Japanese submarine to the Japanese Naval Attaché at Berlin. The operation bears the keyword "Flieder". For details see 1/Skl I op. 1391/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV.

The Submarine Division and the Quartermaster Division, Submarine Section of Naval Staff, the Naval Attaché Section of the Commander in Chief, Navy, and the Chief, Radio and Visual Signals Branch, Naval Communications Division are being informed by Naval Staff, Operations Division of a few important facts about the Japanese submarine. Copy as per 1/Skl I op. 1392/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV.

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Items of Political Importance.

Knox made a speech on the advantages which the conquest of Tunis will bring to the Allies. The shortening of the routes to the Middle East by the opening of the Mediterranean would mean a saving of 5,000 miles by sea, and double the Allies' available shipping, if they were in a position to protect this route from the air; to that end the occupation of Sicily is said to be important and of tremendous advantage.

Franco's speech containing his appeal for peace has been interpreted by the Allies as a propaganda maneuver inspired by Berlin.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that several installations in a Marseilles shipyard were demolished by an explosion. Delays in the deadlines for anti-aircraft corvettes will have to be expected.

II. The Chief, Naval Staff, Intelligence Division reports that Churchill has gone to Washington; it can be concluded from his entourage that the journey has been undertaken only for the purpose of military discussions.

The courier mail captured in Spain is without a doubt authentic. The letters are at present being thoroughly examined and reveal that operations discussed in them are apparently only partial or secondary operations.

The capture of agents dropped by parachute has given away the existence of an illegal organization on a large scale in Denmark.

Extensive riots have broken out in Warsaw. The Jews offered heavily armed resistance to the evacuation of the ghetto. The Jews are being supported by Polish partisans and German deserters.

Special Items.

I. The Chief, Naval Staff went to Rome accompanied by the Chief, Naval Staff, Operations Division.

II. Naval Staff, Intelligence Division submits No. 7/43 in the series "Brief Reports on the Enemy Situation". Attention is called to the description of the frigate and the "S" class submarine on pages 4 and 5 (1/Skl 14561/43 geh. in War Diary, Appendix "Material on the Enemy Situation).

Situation 12 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance intercepted eight steamers and three guard ships southwest of Queenstown and one steamer west of Ireland.

Only one enemy plane was operating over the Bay of Biscay. Radio intelligence located several vessels outside the Bay of Biscay, furthermore one radio guard ship on 48° N 22° W. Ships of this type are radio guard ships of convoys.

2. Own Situation:

Nothing special to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

The torpedo boats MOEVE, JAGUAR, and GREIF of the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla transferred to Rotterdam.

Four ground mines were swept off the Frisian Islands.

The escort duties within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses North were carried out according to plan.

1. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Our air reconnaissance sighted five merchantmen and four guard ships on westerly course about 110 miles east of the southern tip of Spitsbergen.

Radio intelligence intercepted four Russian submarines off the Arctic coast. There was moderate air activity over the North Sea; three planes of the Iceland squadrons were operating.

Own Situation:

Fifteen ships less than heretofore were found present in Murmansk, according to reconnaissance reports of the 5th Air Force at 2100 on 11 May. In this way the start of a QP convoy has come within the realm of possibility. Following this report the Admiral, Northern Waters ordered the task force to three-hour's readiness and the dispatch of three more submarines. It was impossible to take further measures, as there was not sufficient information for the operation of the task force and this had to be first procured by the Air Force. (For the directive from the Group North see 1/Skl 1407/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

Air reconnaissance flown in the course of 12 May showed a transfer of the missing ships from Murmansk to the Kola and Yokonga Bays. Consequently, the departure of a convoy is not for the moment expected. The transfer of ships must be interpreted as an avoiding action to guard against fighter-bomber attacks. Normal readiness has, therefore, been ordered for the task force by Group North from midday on, and measures for the commitment of the submarines left to the discretion of the Admiral, Northern Waters. (Copy as per 1/Skl 13932/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

The barrages "VIII a" and "IX a" have been laid north of Hammerfest. Thirty ships were escorted north and 17 south.

The Naval Command, Norway, issues mine warnings for the areas of Soerolya and Mageroey.

Special Items.

I. Group North, Fleet submits a request for the reinforcement of the West Wall. Naval Staff is in accord with the request and has given orders for appropriate mine allocation. (1/Skl 1336/43 Gkdos. Chefs. and 1/Skl I E 13591/43 Gkdos.)

II. Group North, Fleet has given orders that the Commander, Armed Forces, Norway is to be given a broad outline from time to time, as requested, of the movements of our naval forces in the coastal approaches. (See War Diary, Part A, 6 May and Telegrams 1846 and 1847.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

A convoy of 20 vessels was reported on easterly course off Seiskari.

Eleven vessels were lying in the harbor near Lavansaari, and eleven were engaged on minesweeping. Finns observed a diving submarine northwest of Skenskoer. Fishing vessels were attacked by Russian planes off Narva.

2. Own Situation:

Five steamers and one submarine were escorted and 17 vessels detailed for the channel patrol within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic.

The vessel DORPAT of the Minelaying Experimental Command, which struck a mine and sank, has been raised and towed into Aarhus.

Various sabotage plots have been reported from Denmark. In Aarhus, for instance, a steam supply barge and a patrol boat were damaged; and in Aalborg the pumping station of the large dry-dock was blown up.

Southeast of Moen a Swedish steamer struck a mine. The ship is being towed ashore.

An examination of the wreck of the GNEISENAU revealed the possibility of the establishment of a temporary observation post and anti-aircraft emplacement with two four-barreled anti-aircraft guns. Naval Station Baltic has requested the construction accordingly. (See Telegram 1304.)

The portion of the Submarine Acceptance Command closed to shipping has been declared open again following an unsuccessful search. The Finns have laid the barrage "Sola B".

The detour channel off Reval (Tallinn) has been swept 100 per cent clear. Clearance work was carried out in the barrage "Warthburg III"; it had to be canceled off Windau because of the weather conditions. Submarines were on patrol behind the barrages as usual.

V. Merchant Shipping.

Naval Staff approached the Foreign Office requesting that steps be taken to make it possible for merchant seamen from occupied territories, who are working for the enemy powers and wish to return to their homeland, to do so. (1/Skl I ca 14147/43 geh.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing special to report.

2. Own Situation:

Groups "Elbe I" and "Elbe II" are shadowing the SL convoy. Special reports have not yet come in.

The attack of Group "Drossel" against the HX convoy was without success because of the strong air and naval escort. Two straggling steamers totalling 12,800 BRT were sunk.

About five submarines are at present in the Cape area. One submarine reports the sinking of a steamer of 8,000 BRT.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity.

Ninety four planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating in the West, 13 planes in the Mediterranean.

The town and harbor of Lowestoft were attacked by 24 FW 190's in the evening. It is expected that good results were achieved. In the forenoon patrol boats were attacked by fighter-bombers off Lowestoft. One boat was sunk.

The enemy incursion activity by day into the west area was of medium strength.

A total of 266 planes were over the German Reich and occupied territories during the night. Raids in the east concentrated largely on Warsaw. Much damage was inflicted. Raids in the west had Duisburg for their focal point; raids on this city have never before been as severe. Extensive damage resulted. Twenty five planes were shot down by night fighters and three planes by anti-aircraft artillery, according to reports received so far. For details refer to the Daily Situation.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

One hundred thirty planes of the 2nd Air Force were operating. Thirty bombers raided Algiers during the night of 12 May, scoring hits on the harbor.

3. Eastern Front:

Forty one planes were shot down on 11 May, three of our own planes failed to return. Nine boats were destroyed in the sea of Asov. The Volga River was once more fouled with mines during the night of 11 May.

Special Items.

I. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southeast reports an extraordinary increase in enemy air activity over southern Greece and the Cyclades Islands.

The Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff announces that the X Air Corps is being transformed into the Air Force Command, Southeast by order of the Fuehrer. The demarkation line of the operational command between the Air Force Command, Southeast and the 2nd Air Force will be stipulated by the Commander in Chief, Air Force in accordance with the High Command, Navy.

II. The Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff decided that the first Minesweeper Wing is to be allotted six further minesweeping planes (see Telegram 1535).

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The transport which put into Gibraltar on 11 May proceeded to the Mediterranean after a brief halt. A convoy of 12 freighters, 1 tanker, 1 cable layer, and 1 landing transport left Gibraltar in the forenoon of 12 May, presumably eastbound.

Our air reconnaissance detected 20 steamers and three guard ships off Oran on westerly course. Present in Oran itself were eleven passenger ships, four tankers, and ten freighters. The photographic reconnaissance of Arzeu revealed a large accumulation of landing craft of all types. A landing exercise was taking place outside the harbor at the time. Nothing was sighted between Algiers and Cape Bougaroni. The following vessels were detected late in the afternoon: a total of 5 destroyers between Bone and Tunis, 2 destroyers and 1 hospital ship about 30 miles east of Cape Bon, 3 destroyers off Gozo, and 7 steamers and 4 guard ships off Cape Serat.

In the forenoon of 12 May the Italian Navy located two unidentified vessels west of, and one northwest of Pantelleria.

American troops and one American Divisional Staff have arrived on Cyprus, according to press reports.

Fresh Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand troops are said to have been transferred from Suez to Tripoli (Syria), an agent reported.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four Italian submarines were in the operational area.

A German submarine scored a hit on a convoy off Oran during the night of 11 May.

The 3rd PT Boat Flotilla had to break off a sweep towards Cape Bon because of the weather conditions.

Three Aegean boats put into Salerno. One naval landing craft, three infantry landing craft and one Siebel ferry were destroyed during air attacks on Pantelleria on 10 May. Two steamers were slightly damaged during an air attack on Catania on 11 May. Naples was attacked on the night of 12 May; fires broke out in the harbor.

The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South reports on the land situation as follows:

on 11 May: The Army Group has been cut off from the Bon peninsula by a penetration of enemy armored cars. Straggling groups still present there are fighting to the bitter end. It was not until the last shell had been fired that the enemy was able to breach our positions. Any movements, no matter how slight, have become impossible following the exhaustion of the last stores. The 90th Light Africa Division rejected an offer to surrender.

on 12 May: The combat groups of von Arnim and Messe have been separated by the advance of enemy armored forces. The final report, a very corrupt message from the army group at 0850 reads as follows:
"..... to defend (Tr.N.: supplement: to the last ?) cartridge, executed. von Arnim"
The encircled 1st Italian Army had so far been able to repulse all attacks with unbroken fighting spirit.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

One naval landing craft carrying a number of officers and men of all three Armed Forces called at Trapani in the afternoon of 11 May.

The hospital ship LAURANA arrived at Sousse on 12 May.

A convoy of several small vessels left Marseilles for Genoa on 12 May.

Special Items.

I. The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff decrees by order of the Fuehrer that for the defense of Corsica a reinforced German regiment is to be transferred there, and that two months' supplies are to be provided for this combat group. (Copy as per 1/Skl 13937/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. The Bureau of Naval Armament submitted its views on the Italian wishes regarding war materiel to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (1/Skl 13197/43 Gkdos.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Sailing vessels were repeatedly attacked by enemy planes in the vicinity of Milos on 11 and 12 May. Two Ju 52's were shot down northwest of Milos on 11 May.

Own Situation:

The convoy traffic ran to schedule. The minelaying task "G 19" was carried out according to plan.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Fairly lively convoy traffic was observed off the Caucasian coast, according to air reconnaissance of 12 May, two merchantmen and one convoy of three coastal vessels were at the beachhead and one large ship was sighted off Sukhum. Three air attacks were carried out on Feodosia on 12 May. Damage to buildings resulted. Ship "19" was attacked from the air off Feodosia but suffered no damage.

Own Situation:

Two PT boats on their way to the operational area were attacked by twelve enemy planes without damage. Two enemy planes were shot down by fighters.

Two Anapa transports were attacked from the air suffering slight casualties on 11 and 12 May. The ferry service Kerch and Temriuk ran to schedule.

Three naval artillery lighters put into Feodosia on 12 May. They had been attacked by planes while on passage.

The dock convoy dropped anchor in the northern part of the Kerch Strait on 12 May.

Special Items.

I. Group South in accordance with the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping, Deputy for German Sea Transportation in the Mediterranean urgently requests the transfer of the shipping released from the Tunis transport service to the Black Sea. (See Telegram 2003.)

II. With regard to its request for the reinforcement of the anti-aircraft defense of Sevastopol, Group South has been informed in detail that naval anti-aircraft artillery and airplane reporting service are not available and that the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff has issued orders that the anti-aircraft artillery at Sevastopol be reinforced without further delay. (1/Skl 13957/43 Gkdos. and War Diary, Part A, 2 May.)

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

The Naval Attaché, Madrid has submitted a report on a discussion with the Naval Aide to General Franco who enjoys the latter's special confidence.

The defense of Spanish neutrality in the event of an Anglo-American attack is being given very serious consideration in the Caudillo's most intimate circles. A great handicap in making preparations is said to be the Spanish inability to keep things secret. (1/Skl 13911/43 Gkdos.).

More shipping space is now available, according to Reuter, thus making possible increased supplies not only of war equipment but also of food to be shipped to Russia.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff.

I. In connection with acts of sabotage in Denmark, the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division has been requested to check countermeasures against such plots by the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff.

II. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports the request of the Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Ordnance Division, Communication and Equipment Branch that a British PT boat which was captured in Norway should be transferred to the Baltic in order to test the location gear which was found aboard.

The Naval Command, Norway envisages great difficulties in the transfer of the boat and requests that it be left where it is at present.

The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff decides that the boat is to be transferred to the Baltic to carry out the important tests.

III. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff gives a verbatim report of the documents seized in Spain.

They comprise:

1. a letter dated 23 Apr. from the War Office, London addressed to General Alexander dealing with the landing operations "Husky" and "Brimstone";

2. a letter from Lord Mountbatten addressed to Admiral Cunningham, and

3. a letter from Lord Mountbatten addressed to General Eisenhower.

It can be gathered from the first mentioned letter that a landing operation on a large scale is to take place in the western Mediterranean in the course of which

Sicily is to be attacked as a mock objective, and that mention is made of a landing at two places in the Peloponnese with a diversionary operation against the Dodecanese.

From the second letter it can be seen that the main landing will take place in the western Mediterranean, apparently on Sardinia.

In the judgement of the Army General Staff the documents are without a doubt authentic, but deal possibly only with subsidiary operations to a main landing, which will presumably be on Sardinia. (Copy in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.) The views of Foreign Armies West as per 1/Skl 1420/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

The German Naval Command, Italy, Group South, and Commanding Admiral, Aegean have been informed of certain extracts from the contents of the documents.

The cover names mean: "Husky", landing in the Peloponnese; "Brimstone", landing in the western Mediterranean.

IV. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division draws attention to the transports of war materel from the Persian Gulf to Egypt observed recently. (1/Skl 13992/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

A new type of landing craft was observed, - a special anti-aircraft artillery landing craft of 250 t with the designation "LSF".

The Russians announced that they sank 153,000 BRT in Northern Waters during the past six months.

The preparations for the mobilization of the Danish Armed Forces were suspended as a result of German objection. According to information from Danish authorities, it was a question of measures which were to be completed by a certain date.

Special Items.

I. The Naval (Ship) Construction Division submits a survey showing the deadlines for ships already under construction and those planned. (1/Skl 13498/43 Gkdos.)

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch informs the authorities concerned that the landing craft base at Linz is to be established immediately.

III. Armed Forces High Command, Intelligence Division submits a resume of a variety of ideas on the enemies' invasion plans combining the likely with the unlikely in equal measure. It has been compiled from conversations which a trusted agent was able to carry on in Vatican and Comintern circles. (1/Skl 14560/43 geh. in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.)

IV. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submits a treatise on the types of landing craft found in the western Mediterranean (1/Skl 14503/43 geh. in War Diary, appendix "Material on the Enemy Situation".)

V. The Armed Forces High Command, Special Staff for Mercantile and Economic Warfare states in a survey that 2,500 to 3,000 t of caoutchouc must be imported in 1943, and that the import of additional quantities of caoutchouc is very desirable, as the execution of the emergency program now set up implies considerable disadvantages to the general processing of caoutchouc. (1/Skl 13196/43 Gkdos.)

The Bureau of Naval Armament announces that the Reich Office for Caoutchouc has corrected its original demand, and now requires a monthly minimum import of 500 t of crude caoutchouc for the European area under Axis domination. (1/Skl 13894/43 Gkdos.)

At a conference in Rome on 12 May the Commander in Chief, Navy suggested to Admiral Riccardi that he should transfer more large Italian submarines to the Atlantic and equip them for transport purposes, and offered in turn to allot one German combat submarine to Italian crews for each of the former.

After Admiral Riccardi had taken note of this matter without expressing his opinion on it, the Commander in Chief, Navy emphasized that he considered the execution of this measure as being to their mutual advantage.

VI. A confidential agent of the German Legation at Stockholm reported that the sinking of refrigerator ships would, at the moment, mean a harder blow to the organization of supplies for Great Britain than would the sinking of wheat cargoes.

A check made by Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division reveals that, at present, about one million BRT in refrigerator ships are still available; that the loss of every single one of these special ships however weighs heavily, as ships of this type are difficult to construct and take a long time.

The Naval Staff, Submarine Division is being informed to this effect as per 1/Skl I ca 13699/43 geh.

VII. The Air Reconnaissance Section submits the Special Radio Monitoring Report No. 19/43.

Attention is drawn to the convoy routes used in the North Atlantic between the end of April and the beginning of May as set out in appendix 8.

Situation 13 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

The auxiliary vessel WOOLWICH carried about eight to nine planes to St. Helena, which are said to form an anti-submarine squadron there. The WOOLWICH herself is bound for Simonstown to serve as a depot ship for corvettes and destroyers.

2. Own Situation:

It has been reported from Dakar that, according to reports of 13 Apr., the French cruiser GEORGES LEYGUES lying in Dakar sunk a German supply ship bound for Japan and took 90 men prisoner. The sinking is said to have taken place on the equator while the cruiser was patroling the South Atlantic. The supply ship carried fuel and a number of trained submarine gunners who had embarked in one of the Biscay ports.

The Naval Staff concludes from the number of prisoners taken that it was the blockade-runner PORTLAND.

For this reason the PORTLAND has been asked in Radiogram 1724 for a position report.

1. According to a report from Dakar, the French cruiser GEORGES LEYGUES sank a supply ship bound for Japan on the equator on 13 Apr. taking 90 men prisoner. Naval Staff assumes this was the PORTLAND.

2. In case this assumption should be incorrect, radio your position by short signal at the next opportunity. After transmission of the message alter position as fast as possible.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Air activity in the Bay of Biscay was moderate. Sixteen planes were operating. Air reconnaissance detected several British vessels and one radio guard ship west and northwest of the Bay of Biscay. Our own air reconnaissance sighted what was taken to be one cruiser and two destroyers south of Lands End.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

One ground mine was swept off St. Jean de Luz.

Channel Area:

The MOEWE, GREIF, and JAGUAR put in to Dunkirk on 14 May.

One patrol boat, the quay, and one oil pipeline were damaged during an air raid on Cherbourg on the afternoon of 13 May.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

The minesweeper M "8" sank early in the morning of 14 May after being hit by two torpedoes off Scheveningen. No further details have been received.

The minesweeping and escort duties in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out according to plan.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance of Archangel detected twelve steamers, two tankers, and two torpedo boats.

One submarine was sighted off Cape Lasar and two north of the Kola inlet.

The convoy which was reported in the War Diary of 12 May as east of the southern tip of Spitsbergen was not after all in this position, but 16 miles northwest of Ostrovo under cover of the coast. The reason for this inaccuracy was an error in the transmission of the grid square.

Reconnaissance activity along the southwest coast of Norway was lively, according to the radio intelligence.

Eight planes were operating in the Iceland region.

One submarine was detected off Nordkyn on 12 and 13 May. Another one was reported at the entrance to Folda fjord on 13 May.

Own Situation:

As the latest air reconnaissance did not reveal any indications that a QP convoy is to be expected, the Commanding Admiral, Norway has withdrawn the three submarines which put out from Hammerfest.

The submarine pursuit off Nordkyn and Folda fjord has so far been without result. Our eastbound convoy was attacked by submarines without success east of Nordkyn.

A large open motor boat was seized near Skudesnaes on 12 May. The search for the crew is in progress.

A convoy was attacked with aerial torpedoes south of Lister, and the tankers THANN and KLAUS HOWALDT were hit. The tanker THANN is afloat, the KLAUS HOWALDT was beached.

Twenty eight ships were escorted north and 26 south.

The first three ships of the resumed Goeteborg traffic left Kristiansand westbound.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Guardship traffic off Lavansaari was normal. Enemy air activity off Tyters Island was very lively, there were bombing raids on the island and our minesweeping units. An air raid on Narva Bay did not inflict any damage.

2. Own Situation:

Nine steamers, three tankers, and four submarines were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic and nine vessels detailed for channel patrol.

A Danish motor sailing vessel struck a mine and sank in the Little Belt. Minesweeping operations off Windau and Reval (Tallinn) were broken off because of the weather conditions.

A leave transport and a troop transport left Reval (Tallinn) for Hangoe and Jacobstadt respectively.

The submarine patrol behind the minefields was carried out to schedule.

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

The Intelligence Center Portugal learned the following enemy convoy movements from a British Shipping Office:

A large convoy of 60 to 80 ships is en route from Great Britain. The main portion is bound for the Mediterranean, two smaller portions for West African ports and Lisbon. The ships are expected in the latter port on 15 or 16 May.

2. Own Situation:

Groups "Elbe I" and "Elbe II" lost contact with the SC convoy as a result of strong air and naval escort. A boat reported an aircraft carrier northeast of the operational area.

The engagement of Group "Drossel" with the HX convoy had to be broken off because of strong air and naval defense.

An independently operating boat intercepted a westbound ON convoy south of Iceland and torpedoed two ships. The boats lying ahead of this convoy were detailed to operate against it as Group "Donau".

The fouling of the minefield gap in the St. George's channel has been carried out.

No traffic was detected off Durban and East London, according to a report from a submarine in the Cape area.

Special Items.

Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Submarine Branch informs the offices of the High Command, Navy concerned on the increase in the submarine construction program to 30 boats a month. (1/Skl 13983/43 Gkdos.)

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

The ball bearings plant at Chelmsford was attacked by 85 bombers during the night. Details are not known yet.

There was brisk enemy incursion activity over the west area by day with a severe raid on the Potez works near Albert in Belgium, also an attack on the railway station of St. Omer.

Ten planes were shot down.

Two hundred and forty enemy planes were on night operations, concentrating their efforts on the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial region, above all on Duisburg and Bochum. For details see Daily Situation.

2. Mediterranean:

Algiers was attacked by 70 Ju 88's. Hits on six steamers were observed.

3. Eastern Front:

No reports on planes shot down have been received. Nine boats were destroyed in the Sea of Asov on 13 May.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

One auxiliary aircraft carrier and one U.S. tanker with four motor gun boats aboard put into Gibraltar on 13 May.

The KING GEORGE V left with four destroyers for the Mediterranean in the afternoon.

Seven destroyers were reported on westerly course off Alboran on 13 May.

Air reconnaissance revealed the following:

Fourteen landing craft course east, east of Algiers; 1 troup transport course southwest, north of Algiers; 9 ships with barrage balloons off La Cade; 6 ships north of Tabarca; 3 destroyers southeast of Cape Bon; 1 cruiser and 2 destroyers between Pantelleria and Malta. Numerous landing craft of various types in the harbor of Jijelli.

Eleven vessels, including seven merchantmen were sighted west of Bizerta, course west.

One British cruiser, 1 carrier, 2 American torpedo boats, 2 American submarines, 2 other British warships, and 1 Greek minesweeper are said to have left Aden for Suez on 7 May, according to an unconfirmed agent's report.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four Italian submarines were in the operational area.

During the night of 12 May, three boats of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla fired six torpedoes without results against three westbound destroyers of the TRIBAL class, ten miles east of Kelibia. The enemy disappeared from sight towards the north.

Offensive operations were restricted by the seaway.

One submarine chaser was detailed to carry out a submarine hunt off Capri.

One auxiliary minesweeper and one auxiliary motor minesweeper en route for Pantelleria put about because of the enemy situation.

Five minesweeping picket boats on railroad trucks, which had just arrived, were damaged during an air raid on Reggio.

A severe air raid on Cagliari took place during the noon hours of 13 May. Eight hundred heavy bombs were dropped causing damage to the town and harbor. At the same time Augusta was attacked and serious damage to buildings inflicted. Another severe attack on Cagliari took place during the night of 13 May. No details have been received. Three submarine chasers and seven boats are en route from Marseilles to Toulon.

Special Items.

The Quartermaster General, Army High Command requests an investigation as to whether, seeing that the African task has been completed, the turn-round of shipping from Trieste to Greece could be expedited or increased, as it is now planned to transfer the supplies intended for Africa stored in Italy to the Greek area.

3. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Two auxiliary sailing vessels were attacked by planes off Milos, one boat sank.

A magnetic non-contact firing drift mine which had been camouflaged as a can by a British sabotage squad was found off the isle of Paros. Its explosive charge is about 15 kg. The mine has been rendered safe and examined.

Own Situation:

The submarine hunt in the North Aegean Sea has still brought no result.

Small ship traffic off Salonica is once more permitted to proceed. One submarine chaser left for the south coast of the Peloponnese on a special mission.

The Italian torpedo boat SAN MARTINO, which is to replace the destroyer HERMES, reports engine trouble.

The sea transport turnover achieved in the Aegean Sea for the month of April was reported as 27,644 t.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Only slight shipping was observed off the Caucasian coast, according to the air reconnaissance of 13 May.

Two Russian PT boats off Anapa were shelled by shore batteries during the night of 12 May. Anapa was shelled by several destroyers during the night of 13 May. No detailed reports have been received.

Own Situation:

PT boat operations off Tuapse were hindered by fog; the boats fought an action with two gun boats without suffering damage.

One of the two Italian PT boats, which rammed each other south of Taman, sank.

The 1st PT Boat Flotilla acted as remote escort for the dock convoy and operated against the landing place Myshacov during the night of 13 May.

The dock convoy proceeded as far as Feodosia without incident. The convoy was temporarily reinforced by the naval artillery lighters MAL "1" to "3". A minesweeping plane failed to return after an explosion of a swept mine north of Kerch. As a result only two minesweeping planes are at present operational.

The ferry service and supply transports ran to schedule.

Special Items.

Group South requests an increase in the anti-aircraft defense for Constanta (See Telegram 1540.)

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Japan reports total of ships sunk in April:

Three ships totalling 25,000 BRT sunk by submarines, 23 ships totalling 113,000 BRT sunk by planes.

American troops landed on three groups of the West Aleutians, including Attu, on 12 May.

Special Items.

The German Embassy, as directed, brought up the question of shipping from the U.S.A. to the Russo-Siberian ports for discussion with the Japanese government.

The Japanese government replied in the form of a memorandum, from which can be seen that Japan is endeavoring to avoid a conflict with Russia at all costs. (1/Skl 13501/43 Gkdos.)

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Items of Political Importance.

With regard to the discussions between Churchill and Roosevelt in Washington Exchange Telegraph reports that the situation, as far as it concerns the submarine war, is looked upon in the White House as very reassuring. The number of new ship constructions in excess of the number of ships sunk is said to have steadily increased during the past few months. Furthermore it is believed that by next September it will be possible to have aircraft carriers detailed to every convoy. Bomb carrying fighters, operating from small aircraft carriers, are said to be the decisive weapon against submarines.

A former Portuguese naval officer discussed at some length in a Portuguese newspaper the question of how the Allies could combat the German submarine menace. The most urgent problem to be solved by them was the question of adequate bases for air patrol of the Atlantic. The Portuguese censorship took steps against the author because the conclusion to be drawn from his argument was that the Portuguese would understand if the Allies seized the Portuguese islands. (1/Skl 14452/43 geh.)

Conference on the Situation with the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff.

I. During the report on the situation at Fuehrer Headquarters objection was raised to the dock convoy in the Black Sea having been defended by naval artillery lighters. Naval Staff considers that the defensive measures taken by the Commanding Admiral, Black Sea were correct. The Commanding Admiral, Black Sea had no other means available to defend this dock adequately, which is so extraordinarily valuable to shipping.

II. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that two submarine chasers in the Mediterranean are once again ready for operations.

III. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff calls attention to the fact that, according to a report from a reliable agent, island Greeks familiar with the local terrain have been picked out from crews of Greek destroyers for future landing operations. (1/Skl 14558/43 geh.)

Special Items.

I. The Chief, Naval Staff returned in the evening from his visit to Rome after a brief report at Fuehrer Headquarters. For a record of the itinerary and the results of the visit see War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

II. Group Command South submitted a study on combined operations against the Caucasian coast. In view of the fact that it is impossible to obtain adequate transports and escorts, the Group has arrived at the conclusion that the operation cannot be executed. (1/Skl 1317/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

III. The Admiral, Landing Craft and Bases reports establishment of the 5th Landing Craft Flotilla completed.

IV. The Commander, PT Boats announces that until all boats are fitted alike it will be necessary in correspondence concerning PT boats to add certain designations, such as "A" meaning equipped with 4 cm anti-aircraft artillery, "P" with sheet armor, and "K" with armored bridge. (1/Skl 14912/43 geh. in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.)

V. The Naval (Ship) Construction Division submits rough drafts for the conversion of 9,000 BRT merchantmen into aircraft carriers.

> The question of carriers is, at present, only in the preliminary stages of consideration, as the Air Force is not building any planes for use on carriers. (1/Skl 13893/43 Gkdos.)

Situation 14 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The OSORNO was informed in Radiogram 0958 of sanction of her arrival in Batavia which was reported by the naval attaché.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

There was brisk air activity on the part of 19th Group over the Bay of Biscay, 35 planes having been observed. Several British vessels were located outside the Bay of Biscay.

Our air reconnaissance detected one steamer and one corvette on southerly course northwest of Lisbon, and two merchantmen and one guard ship southwest of Lisbon.

It is reported by an agent from Lisbon that steam trawlers sighted one very big U.S. warship escorted by three destroyers on southerly course off Setubal on 13 May.

Twenty-five Spitfires and Hampdens attacked the harbor and vessels in the harbor of the island of Guernsey.

Fighter-bombers attacked patrol boats off Boulogne without inflicting damage.

2. Own Situation:

Area Atlantic Coast:

One minesweeper struck a mine and was damaged in the entrance to Brest.

Channel Area:

An air raid on Cherbourg took place towards noon. A dock gate was damaged.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Twelve Bristol Blenheims attacked our minesweepers off Ijmuiden without inflicting damage.

Our own fighters fired on four retreating British PT boats west of Scheveningen.

Own Situation:

One enemy PT boat was sunk and two other boats set on fire by the 1st Minesweeper Flotilla during a PT boat engagement off Scheveningen. The Commander, two officers and 54 enlisted men of the sunk minesweeper M "8" are missing. British naval forces claim to have sunk two German torpedo boats off the Dutch coast, according to a Reuter report of the afternoon of 14 May. The report refers to the skirmish with the 1st Minesweeper Flotilla.

The escort duties in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out according to plan.

Two ground mines were cleared off the Frisian islands.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Russian submarines were informed of an eastbound freighter in the area of Rolfsoey, according to radio intelligence. One submarine left Polyarno for the Barents Sea on 13 May. Air activity over the North Sea was very brisk, six planes of the Iceland squadrons were operating.

Air reconnaissance over Kola Bay reveals 31 freighters and two tankers present, that of Archangel shows twelve freighters and two tankers.

Own Situation:

The Norwegian motor boat SEUTZ (300 BRT) carrying army material sank north of Trondheim from an unknown cause.

An unsuccessful aerial torpedo attack by three planes took place on the west coast.

Thirty-eight ships were escorted north and twenty south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Our army battery near Narva was unsuccessfully shelled by a 13 cm Russian battery. Several attacks by enemy planes took place near Tyters Island.

2. Own Situation:

Eight steamers, one tanker, and four submarines were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Thirteen vessels were detailed to patrol the channels.

The target ship HESSEN was fired on by planes bearing German markings off Leba. Investigations at our own Air Force stations did not bring any results.

A schooner of 111 BRT struck a mine and sank off Langeland.

A severe air raid on Kiel took place between 1150 and 1214, carried out by about 120 Liberators in several waves at an altitude of 8,000 m. The smoke screen was hardly effective due to the calm and the penetration of the sun's rays. The majority of the bombs fell in the dock area. The damage, particularly in the Germania shipyard, is considerable. The large dock and lifting gear with two submarines sank. One submarine was seriously, two submarines slightly damaged. Several workshops were destroyed in the naval dockyard. Eight planes were shot down by fighters, two by naval anti-aircraft artillery. For details see Daily Situation and Telegrams 1530, 1825, 1920, 2230, and 2030.

The 100 per cent clearance of the barrage "Warthburg III" is being continued. Submarine patrol behind the barrages was as usual.

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The operation by Group "Elbe I" and "Elbe II" was broken off.

Even considering that the convoy was very strongly defended by air and naval forces, the success achieved was extremely slight in relation to the number (25) of submarines operating against it. Only one out of 16 boats which reported contact with the convoy succeeded in launching an attack, and sank two ships totalling 9,000 BRT. The remaining 15 boats were forced off by the defense.

One boat (the submarine U "186") was lost during this operation. Two other boats were damaged so severely by bombs from aircraft or depth charges that they had to break off the operation.

An exact assessment on the true circumstances surrounding the convoy cannot be formed until the return of the boats.

The negligible success of the convoy operation of Group "Drossel" is in the main attributable to the small number of boats which gained contact with this convoy. At first seven boats were operating, and later on eight others joined them. The defense, which had been very strong from the beginning, especially from land- and carrier- based planes, did not allow the boats to approach, and frustrated planned attacks. Five boats gained contact without managing to fire a torpedo. Not a ship was sunk out of the convoy, but four ships totalling 30,000 BRT are straggling as independently sailing vessels.

One boat (the submarine U "456") was definitely, and two boats (the submarines U "89" and U "753") were very probably lost. Two boats were so seriously damaged that they had to break off the operation.

This convoy engagement was very severe for the small number of boats because of the very strong air defense.

Group "Donau" with 25 boats expects an ON convoy south of Greenland today.

One boat attacked a convoy on southeasterly course off Freetown without success, and reported a large number of four-engined planes, presumably on ferry flight.

The submarine U "528", which reported being unfit for diving a few days ago, must be considered lost.

Only one of the Italian transport submarines put to sea on 13 May because of the weather conditions and escort difficulties.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff, Submarine Division submits the operational order for a fouling of the convoy routes off Dakar (1/Skl 1428/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

II. Supplementing the monthly report, Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch submits the submarine losses for the month of April 1943 (Skl Qu A II 1409/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.)

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

One Ju 88 managed to force a Halifax to make an emergency landing in the Bay of Biscay on 13 May after 18 attacks. Enemy air activity in the western area was brisk in the course of 14 May. An airfield in the Netherlands was severely hit. Six planes were shot down. Likewise six planes were shot down during a raid on the harbor of Antwerp. The blast furnaces at Ijmuiden were attacked with delayed action fuses dropped by parachute. No reports on damage have yet been received. For details see Daily Situation.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

For results of the air reconnaissance and raids on Italian towns see Situation in the Mediterranean.

3. Eastern Front:

Eighteen planes were shot down on 13 May to a loss of four of our own.

4. Northern Waters:

One submarine was sunk in Kola Bay on 14 May.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

One convoy consisting of 25 vessels and the KING GEORGE with four destroyers put in to Gibraltar from the Mediterranean, 22 landing craft from the Atlantic. Three destroyers and one convoy of 25 freighters left for the Atlantic.

According to an Italian report 25,000 Canadians are said to have been aboard the 13 transports reported on 10 May.

A thorough photographic reconnaissance of the North African ports was carried out on 13 May. Numerous landing craft were found in Algiers, Bougie, Jijelli, and Bone, in addition to three light cruisers in Algiers, and two in Bone. For details see the Air Force reports under Daily Situation. Six freighters were sighted in Bizerta and six minesweepers engaged on mine clearance work off Bizerta on 14 May. One freighter, two destroyers, and one escort vessel on easterly course were reported off El Daba.

Enemy submarines were sighted off Navarino on 13 May, off Nice and San Remo on 14 May, and two boats off Maddalena also on 14 May:

Lampedusa reported four unidentified vessels east of Linosa.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four Italian submarines were in the operational area.

The only German submarine left in the operational area has started on her return passage. Three boats are on their way to the western Mediterranean.

The torpedo boats of foreign origin TA "9", "10", and "11" arrived in Leghorn from Spezia. The boats are to escort two steamers to Olbia.

Numerous severe air raids on various Italian towns took place on 14 May. One ship was sunk and three ships were set on fire in Civitavecchia, besides damage to buildings having been inflicted. In Olbia, one freighter was set on fire, another one had to be beached. Harbor installations were damaged. One plane was shot down. Ten Italian planes were set on fire near Alghero. Two hundred explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped on Palermo, causing serious damage to buildings. Two planes were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery. Four hundred and ten planes attacked Cagliari causing extensive damage to town and harbor. A raid on Augusta caused serious damage to buildings.

The Commanding General, Armed Forces South reports on the land situation in Tunis on 13 May as follows:

The enemy guaranteed the Italian 1st Army honorable surrender on the evening of 12 May. A truce was agreed on for the period of negotiations. In spite of this assurance colored troops once more attacked the 164th Light Division prior to the return of the mediators.

Loyal to their oath, the German and Italian troops of the 1st Italian Army continued the unequal battle against crushing enemy superiority to the very last, and did not surrender until after the last cartridge had been fired and weapons destroyed, and the order to do so from General Messe had been given. In the forenoon of 13 May there was still radio communication with a small German group near Korbus which had annihilated ten armored cars as late as the evening of 12 May.

The last radio message from the German Africa Corps at 0040 on 12 May reads as follows:

"Ammunition exhausted, arms and war equipment destroyed. The German Africa Corps, in accordance with orders, fought to the point of complete material exhaustion. The German Africa Corps must be resurrected. Heia Safari !

Commanding General of the German Africa Corps (signed) Kramer."

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff advises the German Naval Command, Italy that there are only 37 torpedoes suitable for the torpedo boats of foreign origin in German possession, and that the German Naval Command should request the Italian Admiralty to hand over the remaining 72 torpedoes which were issued to the Italians. (1/Skl I t 14131/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. Several reports from submarines in the Mediterranean mention enemy location gear on the Balearic Islands. Naval Staff, therefore, is taking steps to check the reports, so as to be able to take the necessary steps in dealing with Spain. (1/Skl 14140/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

III. By order of the Fuehrer, the Armed Forces High Command has issued an extensive order for the strengthening of the defense forces in the Mediterranean. Accordingly, the available time is to be used for sea transport on the largest possible scale, and the distribution of escort vessels over the central and eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Sea is to be checked. Furthermore the following have been ordered: anti-aircraft reinforcements, the commitment of

anti-tank detachments, land defense measures, airfield defense, and Air Force reinforcements. Naval Staff has informed the subordinate commanders concerned of this order. (1/Skl 1421/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

3. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The area around Euboea has once more been opened to fishing. Escort duties were carried out without any special incident.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

There was slight shipping off the Caucasian coast on 14 May, according to air reconnaissance. One destroyer was at sea off Tuapse and one off the central Caucasian coast, according to radio intelligence. The shelling of Anapa during the night of 13 May was carried out by the CHARKOW and one destroyer of the FRUNSE class, according to the 1st PT Boat Flotilla. It is possible that the destroyers had been detailed to operate against the dock convoy.

Own Situation:

The PT boats operating against the beachhead were not in a position to carry out an offensive because of the weather conditions. Two torpedo attacks on the CHARKOW and the destroyer were without success. The PT boats did not encounter any defense during either attack.

The air escort of the dock convoy fought a submerged submarine in the afternoon of 13 May. Results were not observed. Another enemy submarine was hit by a bomb off Balaclava on 14 May. The sinking was not observed.

The floating dock put in to Sevastopol. The naval artillery lighters were detached from the escort off Yalta and have arrived at Feodosia. The naval artillery lighters were attacked three times from the air while en route to Feodosia. One plane was shot down. The naval artillery lighters MAL "8" and "9" have arrived at the railway yard at Constanta. One piece of the MAL "8" is missing. Another piece sank alongside the quay due to a breakage in the derrick.

Five naval landing craft were attacked five times by planes while en route from Feodosia to Kerch. No damage reported. Two boats of the 1st PT Boat Flotilla are scheduled to operate against the beachhead during the night of 14 May.

The large north dock in Sevastopol has been pumped dry, the dock is undamaged.

Escort duties and ferry service were carried out according to plan.

Special Items.

Naval Staff informs Group South that the assumption expressed by the Group that non-contact mines are not effective at a depth below six meters, is not correct. (1/Skl I E 14105/43 Gkdos.)

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The Japanese Admiralty announces that the situation on the Aleutians after the American landings on Attu is still unsettled. Strong enemy naval forces are apparently involved.

Major units of the U.S. Fleet are said to have left Hawaii for an unknown destination.

Six planes were shot down and five destroyed on the ground during a raid on an airfield near Port Darwin. Air reconnaissance detected 52 enemy planes on Guadalcanal.

It is said that the Japanese have now assumed the initiative in the New Guinea area.

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Naval Staff wishes an investigation made in connection with the air raid on Kiel to see whether it would be possible to extend the alert period for this port.

II. The Chief, Naval Staff has given his approval in retrospect to the action taken by the Commanding Admiral, Black Sea in defending the dock convoy with naval artillery lighters. (see War Diary, Part A, 14 May.)

III. The Chief, Naval Communications Division reports that the research in the field of counterdefense against location has so far produced positive results.

IV. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports in relation to the completion of the anti-aircraft corvettes that one will presumably become ready on 16 May, while, because of the breakdown of an electric engine and many other jobs, a deadline for the other two could not yet be determined. (For details see Telegram 1055.)

The engine overhaul of the NUERNBERG will take place in Wilhelmshaven between 24 May and 20 June.

The cruiser KOELN is being used as an accommodation ship in Kiel and will billet the Fleet Command thus releasing the HELA for submarine tasks (see War Diary, Part A, 10 May).

The duties of a Senior Naval Commander in Paris will be taken over by an officer on the Staff of Group Command West without necessitating a special appointment.

The present state of the transfer operation Auxerre is as follows:

So far five naval landing craft have been transferred, three of which are lying in Marseilles and two in Chalons.
Five naval landing craft and two motor minesweepers are in Auxerre ready for transhipment.
One motor minesweeper is en route.

On the request of the Admiral, Landing Craft and Bases six naval landing craft which had already been earmarked for release to an operational theater will be used instead for training.

V. The Chief, Anti-Submarine Section reported after an official visit to the Aegean Sea that the submarine chasers operating there are unsuitable. The standard of training of the crews is good, the supplies of depth charges on hand are low.

VI. In the course of a discussion on the iron situation called by the Chief, Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Ordnance Division the Chief, Naval Staff informed the former that Reich Minister Speer is giving priority to the iron quotas of the Navy as promised, to make it possible for the Navy to place its orders now. Speer hopes to be able to balance this advance allocation of iron later on by an increase in production in some other quarter. The Navy need not fear that some day the allocation may cease, the iron allocation will be maintained.

VII. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division reports that Churchill made a speech to the Home Guard in the U.S.A. in which he stated, among other things, that the time had come to prepare for the day which was approaching nearer and nearer when the armies at present in Great Britain would start their invasion of the continent.

Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

VIII. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports an assessment of Japanese policy by the Naval Attaché at Tokyo. The view is held in Japan that the war will devolve into a racial war on the largest scale and of considerable duration; that the war in Europe will come to an end sooner than that in the Pacific, that Japan would then no longer be able to count on support from Germany and Italy, and that, consequently, Japan must take advantage of the momentary preoccupation of the enemy in Europe for the improvement of the defenses in the Greater Asiatic area.

Japan is consequently aiming at:

a. Withdrawal from the bases on the Aleutians;

b. improvement in her relations with Russia in every way possible;

c. an attempt to stop the China campaign, which is such a drain on her resources;

d. improvement of the Southern Front;

e. increase in the construction program for merchantmen, submarines, and planes;

f. as much assistance as possible to the Axis partners and yet only in as far as it will be of advantage to Japan.

(1/Skl 1346/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

IX. In the course of a discussion on the question of bases in the Adriatic the Chief, Naval Staff requested more detailed information on the all-around situation (available German and Italian army contingents). The Chief, Naval Staff, Operations Division calls attention to the fact that it is imperative for this question to be dealt with, as there are too few bases in the Aegean Sea. The Chief, Naval Staff acknowledges this necessity, but does not intend to approach the Italians on this matter for the present.

In the course of the discussion on these questions the Chief, Naval Staff stated that we made a fundamental mistake in failing to realize in time that North Africa is a part of Europe.

X. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff brings up the question of sea transports.

The Chief, Naval Staff wants, as a matter of principle, harmony and good understanding with the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping. The fields of activity of the Commissioner of Maritime Shipping and that of the Navy must merge gradually. The Navy must take charge of the tasks of the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping as long as the latter is not in a position to do so. So far this harmony has had only favorable results. Cooperation is found everywhere. The mutual interference with one another's tasks has ceased. In addition, cooperation with the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping has increased the Navy's efficiency considerably in dealing with matters of transportation.

Situation 15 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The written report from the captain of the Spanish steamer who picked up so far the only survivor of the DOGGERBANK, gives an explanation of the loss of this ship. (See War Diary, Part A, 6 May):

The DOGGERBANK was torpedoed off the Canary Islands about 37° West on 3 Mar. Due to the fast capsizing of the ship only a few boats were lowered. All other survivors in the boat, including the captain, died in the course of time. A check on the sinkings by submarines reveals that the ship sunk by submarine U "43" in position 27° N 37° W on 3 Mar. was not the DUNEDIN STAR, as reported, but most probably the DOGGERBANK.

The DOGGERBANK, contrary to her own report and a specific radio order, had stood considerably farther north than had been assumed, thus sailing in an open sector of the route "Anton". It must be assumed that the largest portion of the crew lost their lives; survivors from other boats were possibly taken prisoner. There is no information regarding this. (Copy as per 1/Skl I k 13792/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. I.)

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo and all blockade-runners are being informed in Radiograms 2152 and 2005 of the loss of the DOGGERBANK and the lessons to be derived therefrom.

The radiogram to the blockade-runners reads as follows:

1. The DOGGERBANK was possibly sunk by one of our own submarines west of the Canary Islands. Only one survivor rescued so far. Ship must have stood considerably farther north than her position and route as reported and contrary to radio orders.

2. You will not proceed in advance of times as reported and ordered. Naval Staff is always prepared for delays to occur, for instance as a result of engine break-downs. Sea areas will be closed to attacks on shipping by our own forces allowing a wide margin, in accordance with the reports of the ships. However if the times are exceeded very considerably, danger from our forces will nevertheless be risked.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance reports the following:

Five merchantmen, 4 PT boats off Ramsgate; 3 destroyers, 4 PT boats off Dover; 2 freighters, 25 mine vessels, 5 PT boats (presumably) off Great Yarmouth; 7 PT boats, 4 minelaying vessels, 47 harbor and coastal vessels in Lowestoft, 8 steamers off Lowestoft, 38 merchantmen with 7 guardships off Orfordness, and about 80 steamers on the Thames between Southend and Tilbury.

Air activity over the Bay of Biscay was brisk, 22 planes having been observed. British vessels were located at seven points outside the Bay of Biscay.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Nothing to report.

Channel Area:

One harbor defense boat was attacked by planes off Jersey and one off Middelkerk, resulting in slight casualties.

Special Items.

Naval Staff gives its consent to the execution of the barrage plan requested in 4615/43 Gkdos. Chefs. by Group West, Operations Staff and orders the necessary mine allocation. (1/Skl 14178/43 Gkdos.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

In the course of the forenoon Heligoland was raided by 80 bombers from an altitude of 8,000 meters. Considerable damage to buildings resulted. Three planes were shot down. Radio communication was established with the island because the telephone and teletype communication lines were out of order.

Two mines were swept off the Frisian islands.

The escort and patrol boat duties were partly hindered by weather conditions.

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North reports the execution of the first part of the minelaying task "Stemmbogen" (Telegram 1855).

Special Items.

A check on the future tasks to be carried out by the Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic reveals that the four allotted boats of the 11th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla will no longer be required after the clearance of the "Warthburg" minefields. Naval Staff decides as follows in accordance with a request from the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North:

1. to use the four extra motor minesweepers allotted to the Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic for the clearance of the "Warthburg" minefields;

2. to return the boats to the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North immediately the mine clearance work in the "Warthburg" minefields has been completed.

(Telegrams 2100 and 1/Skl I op. 14099/43 Gkdos.)

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Three Russian submarines were at sea off the Arctic coast on 15 May, according to radio intelligence. Russian planes reported one of our convoys in the morning of 14 May.

Two British minesweepers and two corvettes sailed from a White Sea port for Kola Bay on 15 May.

Air reconnaissance over the North Sea was normal. Three planes of the Iceland squadrons were operating.

Russian batteries on the Ribachi peninsula twice shelled the entrance to Petsamo on 13 May.

Own Situation:

The minelayer SKAGERRAK laid the UMB minefield NW 27 section 1 on 14 May.

Three men of the British motor boat found on 12 May have been captured.

The steamer FEODOSIA was towed into Vardoe.

Thirty ships were escorted north and 26 south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

According to a Finnish report one submarine was northeast of Lavansaari at noon on 15 May.

An air raid on Reval (Tallinn) was carried out in the evening of 15 May causing fires to break out.

2. Own Situation:

The Danish motorship ARUSA (411 BRT) struck a mine off Anholt on 15 May.

Two submarines and ten steamers were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic.

The clearance work in the "Warthburg" minefield "3" is continuing, as also the 100 per cent clearance sweep in Reval Bay.

Special Items.

Naval Staff, Submarine Division reports that during the air raid on Kiel two submarines sank and two others capsized as a result of damage to the docks, two submarines were damaged by hits. Considerable losses through damage to the Germania shipyard must be expected.

V. Merchant Shipping.

I. Naval Staff informs Naval Station Baltic and the Coastal Defense Commander, Pomerania that the Reich Railroad Division Management, Stettin has received instructions to resume the ferry service Sassnitz - Traelleborg. Naval Station Baltic and the Coastal Defense Commander, Pomerania have received instructions to start the ferry service on the basis of the situation prevaling there. (1/Skl II 14719/43 geh.)

II. Naval Staff has decided on the request of Group North that the western limit of the Danish fishing area be shifted to 6° 10' East and that a coastal line of five miles be opened for fishing within the Skagerrak declared area to take the place of the 20 meter line. (1/Skl II 14144/43 geh.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The expected ONS convoy has so far not been intercepted by Group "Donau". Considering the close set-up of the boats and the favorable sighting conditions, there is, for the present, no explanation of this fact. There is still a slight hope that the convoy may have taken sharp avoiding action to the north and may yet be intercepted by the patrol line. A passage north of the group is considered impossible because of the ice conditions. The group is expected to encounter an HX convoy today, according to a special radio intercept report.

The submarine U "607" sank the Irish steamer IRISH OAK last night. The ship's neutrality markings were not illuminated.

One steamer of 4,500 BRT was sunk off Freetown.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

To a loss of seven of our own planes, eight enemy planes were positively, three probably shot down in the western area. One Sunderland was shot down by a Ju 88 after 20 attacks north of Cape Ortegal.

Seventy-seven planes attacked Sunderland during the night of 15 May, achieving on the whole fairly successful results. There was a raid on two airfields in the afternoon causing moderate damage.

Roughly 100 planes were operating over Reich territory during the night of 15 May, and various towns were raided.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

One merchantman and one tanker were hit off Bone during an air attack on 14 May.

3. Eastern Front:

Twenty boats were destroyed in the Sea of Asov on 13 May; the Volga River was fouled during the night of 13 May.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The KING GEORGE V., the NELSON, and the FORMIDABLE are lying in Gibraltar.

Our air reconnaissance over the North African ports revealed no essential changes. Three destroyers were sighted off Cape Bon. The harbor of Bizerta has been used by the enemy since 14 May.

Submarines were reported sighted:

off Marseilles, Maddalena, Cape Bon, Catania, and Civitavecchia. One cruiser

was sighted off Alexandria. The inshore reconnaissance over the Nile Delta - Port Said - Alexandria did not sight any enemy ships.

An agent from Lisbon considered reliable reports as a result of a conversation with an officer of the RAF:

1. An increase in the RAF formations on Malta and Cyprus.

2. Launching of the offensive in the Mediterranean with an attack on southern Italy from Tunisia. Occupation of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica; at the same time attack on Norway. A second attack in the Mediterranean on the Balkans from Syria and Egypt. Start of the offensive not before the end of June - beginning of July.

3. Prior to the launching of the main offensive in the Mediterranean diversionary attacks on occupied territories on the Atlantic and Channel coasts.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

One of our submarine chasers was sunk by an enemy submarine off Nice.

Two submarine chasers are operating off Capri on anti-submarine patrol.

One Italian submarine was sunk and another one damaged during the severe attack on Cagliari on 13 May. The steamer AGATA (2,282 BRT) was sunk and the steamer SAN JOSE (6,013 BRT) beached during the air raid on Olbia on 14 May. One steamer in Palermo was damaged by an air attack. Pantelleria was shelled from the sea and bombed on 13 May.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

Three large supply steamers put in to Olbia on 15 May.

Special Items.

I. Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff transmits an order of the Fuehrer for the preparation of the defense of the Mediterranean positions, which are to be reinforced to the greatest possible extent within the short period of time presumably still available. The measures for Sardinia and the Peleponnese take priority over all others. (Copy as per 1/Skl 1414/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

II. The German Special Staff reports that the demands for escorts can hardly be met with the escort forces available and requests that any plans to withdraw more forces be cancelled.

In addition it has been reported that three auxiliary minesweepers assigned to the Aegean Sea are at present being transferred. (1/Skl 1449/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

III. Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Quartermaster Division decrees that fundamental directives relative to shipping and transport as agreed upon between the Commanding General, Armed Forces South, Transportation Staff, the German Naval Command, Italy (Chief, Supply and Transports), and the Deputy for German Sea Transportation in the Mediterranean are to be reported to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff. The Transportation Staff has been ordered to refrain from any interference in the allocation of ships and settle differences of opinion between the transportation offices concerned on the use of shipping space. The Armed Forces High Command, Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces Overseas has been ordered not to intervene in any individual disposition of ships. The Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces Overseas is to be called upon to participate in the transfer of shipping to the Adriatic, Aegean, or Black Seas. The Transportation Staff is responsible for the reports on transport capacity. (Copy as per 1/Skl 14791/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

One auxiliary sailing vessel was destroyed by a plane off Serifos on 13 May.

A Spanish steamer reports a surfacing submarine east of Volos which was expected by two small boats sending out light signals.

Own Situation:

Four troop transports put in to Piraeus from Rhodes.

Two Swedish supply ships coming from Canada arrived in Piraeus on 14 May.

The convoy traffic ran to schedule.

Special Items.

I. Group South and the German Naval Command, Italy have been informed to the effect that Group South is the German counsellor, responsible to Naval Staff, for Marimorea as regards mining operations on the west coast of the Balkans. The German proposals are being taken care of at the Italian Admiralty by the German Naval Command, Italy. The setting up of German coastal batteries

is being held up pending the requested decision of the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (Telegram 1711). This arrangement is being reported to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, and a fundamental decision on more comprehensive measures requested (i.e. the setting up of German coastal batteries for the protection of minefields.) (Telegram 1703.)

II. Group South reports that the Spanish Navy, because of increased enemy action, plans to withdraw the Spanish crews from its ships in the Aegean Sea. Following the repatriation of the crews, the ships are to continue operating after a change in the ships contours, repainting, and a change of flags. These plans will not be carried out until further instructions from Madrid have arrived; these instructions are not expected for four to six weeks. The Group draws attention to the fact that it is not possible for the steamers to be used without armament, and that a six-weeks' period of waiting is not advocated. An expedited decision to relieve the Spanish crews without delay and to carry out the change of flags, armament, and camouflage as quickly as possible, is requested.

(Telegram 1425.)

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Slight traffic of small vessels and coastal vessels was detected on the Caucasian coast.

Own Situation:

The PT boats had to break off their operations against the beachhead Mys. ov because of weather conditions.

The floating dock convoy arrived in Sevastopol on 14 May.

The naval artillery lighters MAL "2" and "3" put into Kerch; the MAL "1" had to return to Feodosia because of a leakage.

The ferry service ran to schedule.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

A military commentator of the "New York Times" warned against the hope that victory for the Allies would be close at hand after the fall of Tunis. The world would experience another summer of serious crises. Germany is still very strong. He writes: In a way we are our own worst enemy, as the Tunisian campaign has proved. Both as a nation and as soldiers the Americans need much more discipline and tenacity for perseverance. The American losses have been heavy in relation to the forces employed. The greatest problem for the Americans is leadership. The American soldier lacks the characteristics of perseverence and determination, and he goes about his tasks half-heartedly.

The Spanish Air Attaché at Berlin reports on the basis of a conversation he had with the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Spanish Air Minister that the Spanish Air Minister is a faithful and understanding friend of Germany, and that one could also rely on Franco to support the Axis, whereas the Foreign Minister apparently wants to leave a loophole in order to be prepared for any eventuality. The Foreign Minister is said to be strongly influenced by his environment in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which an international spirit prevails.

An agent reports on statements made by the Head of the British Navy Mission in Washington, Admiral Sir Percy Noble, to a close circle of friends. The American theory that Germany could only be forced to her knees by mass raids is said to have gained the upper hand, and the "aircraft carrier" Great Britain will now be gradually exploited by the American Air Force to the fullest extent; it is hoped to have tremendous concentrations of U.S. forces in Great Britain by the end of the year. The only weak link in the organization of the air offensive is said to be the fuel supply from America. It is for this reason that the construction of destroyers is being pressed forward, as they are particularly suitable for the offensive against the German submarines.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

The Chief of Naval Staff has given his consent to the request of the Naval Staff addressed to the Armed Forces High Command concerning minelaying plans on the west coast of the Balkans (see War Diary, Part A, 15 May).

Special Items.

I. Vice Admiral Weichold has submitted a working plan for his special mission. (1/Skl 14015/43 Gkdos.)

II. Naval Staff decrees that all destroyers and boats of the 4th Torpedo Flotilla becoming ready for operations in home waters are to be detailed to operate in the northern area and that no further destroyers will be transferred to the western area. (1/Skl I op 1439/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

III. The Armed Forces High Command informs the Armed Forces of a request from the Reich Minister of Armament and Munitions that all reports to the Fuehrer on the effects of air raids on armament, equipment, and munition production should be left exclusively to the Ministry of Armament and Munitions. (1/Skl 14925/43 geh.)

IV. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch orders that the SCHLESWIG HOLSTEIN, now employed as a repair ship, must surrender all material not needed for training tasks, i.e. ammunition, and that re-establishment of operational readiness, if required, would have to be arranged three weeks in advance. (1/Skl 14913/43 geh.)

V. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division has submitted a report on improvements carried out in the harbor of Casablanca by the Americans. (1/Skl 14879/43 geh. in War Diary, Appendix "Enemy Situation Material".)

Situation 16 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance over southern England revealed the following:

Thirty ships off Hartlepool, 15 - 20 ships between Newcastle and Flamborough Head, 3 coastal freighters off Deal, 8 steamers, 1 PT boat off Dover, 4 steamers off Margate, 3 PT boats and 4 minesweepers south of St. Albans Head, 30 - 35 steamers and 10 - 15 patrol boats east of Start Point, 12 steamers west of Start Point, 4 steamers off Lizzard Head, 10 freighters off Southend, and 1 freighter of 4,000 BRT on easterly course northwest of Iceland.

Forty-one planes of the 19th Group were operating. Two vessels were located off the Bay of Biscay.

An agent reports that a convoy of 50 freighters assembled in Glasgow on 7 May, including three merchantmen converted to aircraft carriers.

2. Own Situation:

Area Atlantic Coast:

One ground mine was swept off the Gironde.

Channel Area:

The 10th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla was bombed and machine-gunned north of Cherbourg during the night and later on off the Seine estuary. One plane was shot down. The escorted weather ship suffered negligible damage below the water line.

In the morning of 15 May a French fishing smack left Cherbourg with a permit from the port captain secured under false pretenses. There is apparently some connection with desertion or espionage by a member of the Navy. The matter is being investigated by court martial.

Special Items.

I. The Naval Command, West once more submitted a request for the allocation of gunboats and enlarged motor minesweepers and asked for a check on the distribution of defense vessels.

Naval Staff decides as follows concerning Group West, Operations Staff,Gkdos. 1692/43 of 30 Apr.43:

"The renewed check on the distribution of forces confirms that nothing further can be gained by the shifting of forces considering the increasingly tense situation and general lack of forces in all areas. The distribution of forces, therefore, remains as ordered in 1/Skl I op. 10578/43 Gkdos.

Naval Staff
B No. 1/Skl I op. 13740/43 Gkdos."

II. Group West submitted the promised report (see War Diary, Part A, 11 May) on the improvement and armament of the anti-aircraft corvettes and minelayers. (1/Skl 14156/43 Gkdos.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Ten British airmen in two rubber dinghies equipped with an emergency radio transmitter were rescued north of Ameland on 16 May.

Danish fishing smacks were repeatedly fired on by our reconnaissance planes in the declared area on 15 and 16 May.

The convoy of ship "5" started on her passage from the Hook to the Elbe in the morning of 17 May. The ship is being escorted by at least one flight of fighters (about 5 planes). Escort and patrol duties were carried out according to plan.

2. Norway, Northern Waters.

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence Russian submarines were informed on 14 May that the TIRPITZ and SCHARNHORST are lying in Alta Fjord.

Air activity over the North Sea was moderate; two planes of the Iceland squadrons were operating.

Enemy planes were reported over Petsamo, Vardoe, and Banak.

Russian batteries shelled the entrance to Petsamo Fjord on 14 May. Our own batteries returned the fire. Planes attacked a convoy defended by six escort vessels off Mandal on 16 May. The tanker HOLSTEIN (10,762 BRT) was hit by aerial torpedoes, caught fire, and ran out of control. The stern has been burned out. Fire extinguishing operations are still going on. The rest of the convoy was once more bombed and machine-gunned during the night without damage being inflicted. The North Sound bridge in Farsund was unsuccessfully bombed.

The remaining crew of the British motor boat consisting of one officer and three enlisted men (Britons) was taken prisoner on the island group Urter: This squad carried out the adhesive mine plot against a minelayer in Kopervik on 3 May.

Thirty-five ships were escorted north and 21 south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Six Russian PT boats were reported north of Hochland during the night of 16 May. The fairway near Hochland has been closed because of danger from mines.

A large convoy of 18 - 25 vessels was observed proceeding from Schepel to Lavansaari during the night of 15 May. There was heavy patrol boat traffic

north of Lavansaari. Enemy air activity was brisk. Enemy planes attacked one of our minesweeping units off Tyters island.

2. Own Situation:

Seven steamers, one tanker, and one submarine were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Twenty-three vessels were on channel patrol.

One mine was swept off Copenhagen, one off Skagen, one off Hertas Flag, and one in Aalbaeck Bay.

Clearance work in the "Warthburg" barrage was carried out according to plan, likewise the submarine patrol behind the "Seeigel" and "Nashorn" barrages. The barrage "Seeigel 31" has been laid. The clearance work off Windau and Reval (Tallinn) had to be canceled because of weather conditions. The KAISER is en route from Baltic Port to Swinemuende. Boats of the 11th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla are being transferred from Kotka to operations in the "Warthburg" barrage.

V. Merchant Shipping.

The Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping in a letter dated January called attention to the fact that the waiting periods of ships for their escorts are extraordinarily long particularly so in Petsamo and Kirkenes, and requested an improvement in the allocation of escorts. The Naval Command, Norway adjusted the waiting periods of ships for escorts reported by the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping and pointed out that a large number of the delays occurred as result of the weather and demands made by other offensive tasks. Naval Staff informed the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping in 1/Skl II 14275/43 geh. of the reasons for delay reported by the Naval Command, Norway.

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

The Groups "Donau" and "Iller" did not intercept the expected convoys.

The HX convoy did not pass on its known route, according to a special intercept report, but by-passed the patrol line to the south.

It can be seen from the submarine situation 13 May issued by the enemy that the patrol line was intercepted by the enemy, and that, as a result, the course of the convoys was changed.

> For the present, it remains a mystery how our submarine dispositions are so clearly intercepted by the enemy.
>
> Betrayal, breaking into codes, or far superior location methods must provide the enemy with the data. Location from planes is likely to be the means by which the enemy discovers our patrol lines.

Both groups were transferred to the southeast on the assumption that the following SC convoy will pass on the same route as the HX convoy.

A freighter of 4,600 BRT was sunk off Freetown, a tanker (presumably) was torpedoed. Continuous air patrol and no traffic are reported from the sea area off Pernambuco. A boat sank a freighter of 5,230 BRT east of Lourenco Marques, and reports only slight neutral traffic.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Three hundred and forty planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating in the western area, eight planes in the Mediterranean.

Three fishing smacks were machine-gunned 120 miles north of Vlieland and sustained damage. 18 fighter-bombers raided London during the night of 16 May. Enemy air activity over the western areas by day was of medium strength. During the night about 180 - 190 planes were operating over German occupied territory, 70 of which flew over Reich territory. Fifty planes in two waves attacked a number of valley dams. The Moehne dam and a section of the Eder dam were severely hit. The power plant at the Sorpe dam was damaged, the Bever dam remained undamaged. The damage resulting from the floods is considerable and cannot yet be assessed.

Night fighters had no success. Anti-aircraft artillery shot down seven enemy planes.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Individual reports concerning a bombing attack on the harbor of Bone during the night of 16 May have not yet been received. An enemy submarine was attacked off Catania. The results were not observed.

3. Eastern Front:

Heavy shipping on the Volga River was observed.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The following ships put into Gibraltar from the Atlantic on 15 May.

One U.S. landing ship transport with 4 landing craft in the davits and 2 on deck, 13 U.S. submarine chasers and 2 guard ships, 2 French freighters, 2 French minesweepers, and 1 French survey ship.

Twenty-two landing craft and 12 U.S. submarine chasers left for the Mediterranean.

No air reconnaissance results for 16 May have yet been received from the western Mediterranean.

Four steamers and three patrol boats were sighted off Tobruk, three steamers and two patrol boats off Port Said.

Enemy submarines were reported off Bastia (Corsica) and Toulon on 15 May, off Catania and south of Cannes on 16 May.

Radio intelligence concludes from exceptionally lively radio traffic between Alexandria and the Middle East that supply traffic from the direction of Suez is increasing.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Three Italian submarines are in the operational area. Two submarine chasers are on submarine patrol between Capri and Salerno.

There was only slight enemy activity over the Italian area in the course of the day. Enemy planes attacked the district of Rome for the first time during the night of 16 May. Bombs were dropped on Ostia, one plane was shot down.

Serious damage was caused during the air raid on Civitavecchia on 14 May. The road leading to the harbor, the railway, and railway sidings were interrupted.

Three steamers, two auxiliary sailing vessels and some smaller craft were sunk. Five steamers were beached. Four steamers were damaged. An air raid on San Antiocco (PT boat base) caused serious damage in the town.

The Commanding General, Armed Forces South reports that the damage in the Sardinian ports resulting from the air raids on 14 May proved to be very considerable. Any further aggravation will result in a slowing down of the loading operations.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The motor ship TOMASEO was torpedoed off Catania on 16 May, according to a report from the Commanding General, Armed Forces South. Details have not yet been received.

Special Items.

I. The German Special Staff informs Group South that the number of naval landing craft available has been decimated by enemy action to such an extent that it will not nearly suffice for the supply of the islands, thus making it impossible to hand over naval landing craft to Group South.

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Shipping and Transport Branch had requested the German Naval Command, Italy and the Chief, Supply and Transport, Italy to report why the orders issued by the High Command, Navy relative to the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping taking charge of sea transport, have not been carried out: The Chief, German Naval Command, Italy reported in this connection to the Chief, Supply and Transport Branch, Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division on 11 May that the present arrangement was made in agreement with the Deputy for German Sea Transportation in the Mediterranean. It was necessary to set up one responsible authority to deal with the corresponding Italian offices. As the loading and discharging is carried out exclusively by the Army, the responsibility for sea transportation had to be transferred to the Chief, Supply and Transport, Italy (Captain Engelhardt). The Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping has transmitted his consent to any arrangement which is in accord with the war situation by teletype to the Commanding General, Armed Forces South.

> In the opinion of all local offices concerned, the solution arrived at is the most expedient one, and appears to function without any friction worth mentioning as a result of cooperation on the part of all offices concerned (Skl Qu A VI 3343/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

This matter was also discussed by the Commander in Chief, Navy with the Chief, Supply and Transport and the Deputy for German Sea Transportation in the Mediterranean on the occasion of the former's visit to Rome.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

An auxiliary sailing vessel was attacked from the air southeast of Piraeus and abandoned by the crew. One minesweeper shot down one plane in the same region.

Own Situation:

The submarine chaser "2101" proceeded to Navarrino after the completion of her special mission off Kalamata.

Escort duties were carried out according to plan.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

The photographic reconnaissance of Gelendjik revealed seven motor minesweepers, seven PT boats, ten coastal vessels.

It has been reported in retrospect that Taganrog was bombed and machine-gunned during the night of 12 May, causing only slight damage.

Own Situation:

An enemy submarine fired torpedoes which ran under two of our naval landing craft off Sudak. The pursuit with depth charges was without any observed result.

There were no PT boat operations because of weather conditions.

The two naval artillery lighters which put into Kerch also have leakages. The cause has not yet been determined. The boats are being repaired in Kerch. The naval artillery lighters MAL "8", "4", and "9" are at present being assembled in Constanta.

The dock escort vessels have started on their return passage to Kerch. The ferry service ran to schedule.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

According to "Dagens Nyheter", British naval circles are very satisfied with the development of the Battle of the Atlantic. The decrease in ships lost is in the first place attributable to the increased employment of aircraft carriers as convoy escorts. Opinion is still divided on the use of helicopters, as they cannot carry bombs.

The Chief of the American Supply Service in the European Theater of War stated in a broadcast from Great Britain to the U.S.A. that his men are at present engaged in preparations for the invasion of the European continent.

Radio Daventry interrupted its normal program on 17 May and made the following special announcement: "The month of May has come, the leaves are budding" (Tr.N.: The beginning of a German folksong.). Obviously this is the issue of a key-word, whose meaning is not possible to interpret.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports with regard to the loss of the tanker EUROSTAD, that there are hardly any small tankers in the Norwegian area, and that large tankers only partly loaded must be used for fuel transport.

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch, Anti-Aircraft Artillery Section reports that a check on the possibilities of earlier alerts for Kiel has not brought any essential change; an improvement of the command transmission system can only advance the time of the alert prior to the attack by five minutes at the most. The order for the smoke-screening of Kiel was issued as early as possible. The smoke-screen, however, did not provide cover because of the weather conditions - complete calm, strong penetration of sun's rays. According to information from Captain Junge, a Fuehrer order is said to exist, stating that the anti-aircraft artillery is to open up at the maximum rate of fire even when the raiders remain out of range.

The Anti-Aircraft Artillery Section reports that the available stores do not permit such a rate of ammunition consumption. The matter is going to be investigated.

III. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff requests that the anti-aircraft corvettes in Toulon be given six days for training, as no training has been possible so far, since guns and fire control devices were not installed until the very last moment. The Chief of Naval Staff has given his consent.

IV. Naval Staff, Operations Division, Foreign Affairs Section (Liaison with Foreign Office and Armed Forces High Command, Intelligence Division) reports that Turkey has refused to supply the French Atlantic Fleet in Alexandria.

The Foreign Office plans to carry out an exchange of seriously disabled military personnel with Great Britain via Switzerland. Switzerland is prepared to take this step, but points out that a conciliatory gesture on the part of Germany in the matter of freeing prisoners from shackles might exert a favorable influence.

With regard to the bombing of hospital ships in Tunis the U.S.A. declared that the hospital ships were lying close to numerous other ships which were legitimate targets, and that a guarantee for the safety of hospital ships could only be given if they were placed sufficiently far apart from other ships.

A protest was lodged by the British against German mines which are alleged to violate the Hague Convention in that they remain active after being torn from their moorings. Reference is possibly made to UMB's on which the safety device is occasionally switched off when they are set shallow. Subordinate commanders have been requested by Naval Staff to report when, where, how many, and why, mines of this type were planted. (Copy as per 1/Skl I E 14317/43 Gkdos.)

V. The Chief of Naval Ordnance Division, Bureau of Naval Armament reports that the Navy, on fitting patrol and escort vessels with splinter and armor protection, met with opposition from the Ministry of Munitions, as the production of this type of armor would affect the general armor program planned for all the Armed Services.

Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

VI. The Chief of Naval Communications Division, Naval Staff reports on the radar research situation, and suggests that the Research Circle formed by the Navy join the High Frequency Research Pool of the Reich Research Council; as the Communications Experimental Command has enjoyed high recognition by virtue of the research work it has accomplished so far, it would be able to play an important part as a member of the Research Council. The control of the over-all research would be in the hands of the Research Council, whereas the Navy Research Circle would follow up the special requirements of the Navy. The Communications Experimental Command is to be relieved entirely of the present production tasks and is to be given only development tasks from now on. The Main Naval Development and Research Stations will be established on the island of Fehmarn.

The Navy intends to make the important and special requirements of the submarine war known to a selected circle of research scientists, physicists, and representatives of industry. Minister Speer, too, has been requested to be present for this instruction. The Chief of Naval Staff will, in a personal address, point out the urgency and importance of this matter to the war effort.

The Chief of Naval Staff is in agreement with the plan and considers the incorporation in the Research Council expedient, provided it is guaranteed that, within the Research Council, the Navy tasks are followed up, not as any one of a number of other demands, but by specific persons solely responsible for that purpose.

In this connection the Chief of Naval Staff pointed out that no time must be lost in going ahead with the development work, as the submarine war is at present at a deadlock. Superior location facilities enable the enemy at present to detect the disposition of the submarine patrol lines, thus making it easy for him to steer his convoys round these dispositions. The Chief of Naval Staff asks for the full-time employment of all adept industrial research scientists and intends taking the necessary steps, after examination of the fields of activity covered by individual persons. Research scientists employed on this task must not be expected to accomplish other tasks besides this one, the most vital to the war effort.

VII. The Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff reports that the Fuehrer has ordered the valley dams to be safeguarded by torpedo nets. The Army Liaison suggested that Army General Staff and also the Air Force General Staff be informed from time to time on the state and the results of the submarine war. The Chief of Naval Staff has consented to this plan.

VIII. The Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division has reported minelaying plans and battery dispositions in the Bodoe area (1/Skl 1 E 14124/43 Gkdos.).

IX. In accordance with a Fuehrer directive, the defense measures for the Peleponnese have been accorded the same priority as those for Sardinia. The German Special Staff attached to the Italian Admiralty, the German Naval Command, Italy, the Group South, and the Commanding Admiral, Aegean are being instructed by Naval Staff that this order is also to be taken into account in connection with the allocation of escort vessels. The German Special Staff, in conjunction with the Italian Admiralty, is to investigate whether the employment of German escort forces for transportation from and to Greece is also expedient or necessary. Plans are to be reported. (Copy as per 1/Skl I Op. 1466/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff is being informed of these instructions to the German Special Staff. It is reported that, for the present, a transfer of German escort vessels from the central Mediterranean to the Aegean Sea is not proposed, with the exception of five auxiliary minesweepers which were temporarily used for the Tunisian supplies.

It is particularly pointed out that a blockade of the Straits of Messina will have to be expected very soon if there is an unfavorable development in the situation in the area Sardinia - Sicily, and that a transfer of forces to Greece will, then, no longer be possible. In that case, a precautionary transfer of forces at least to ports east of the Straits of Messina will have to be carried out in good time. (Copy as per 1/Skl I Op. 1465/43 Gkdos., Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

In the course of the discussion of these problems the Chief, Naval Staff emphasized that he did not want a splitting up of forces.

X. The Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division outlined the operational plans reported by ship "28" (see following page).

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division has submitted a review of the captured enemy documents about future operations in the Mediterranean. It has been found that both operations are to take place simultaneously and that extensive preparations are going on in the eastern Mediterranean as well, about which less news has been received here than from the region of Algeria. The Armed Forces High Command stated in the meantime that the enemy is aware that the documents having fallen into Spanish hands (1/Skl 1451/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.).

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch issued an order setting out the sequence in which degaussing work is to be carried out on warships and merchantmen, so as to prevent merchantmen carrying vital cargo from being accorded second place to warships not needed for urgent assignments. (1/Skl 14726/43 geh.)

III. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division has submitted reviews on:

a. the organization and disposition of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet;

b. PT boat formations in the Black Sea.

(1/Skl 15033/43 geh. in War Diary, Appendix "Material on the Enemy Situation".)

IV. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch submitted the executive order for the conversion of ship "14" to a night fighter control vessel. Naval Staff, Operations Division points out that the armament of the ship appears to be too weak and that the anti-aircraft artillery will have to be increased. (1/Skl III a 13521/43 Gkdos.)

Situation 17 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Ship "28" reported that she wants to put in to Batavia in order to take over mail and supplies from the blockade runners that have put in there. Subsequently, the auxiliary cruiser will sail for the south Pacific for operations, proceeding via southern Australia. An operational area there has been agreed on with the Japanese Navy bounded by the degrees of latitude and longitude 20° N and 140° W. This arrangement constitutes a favorable extension of the operational area as against the original agreement Equator - 120° W. Ship "28" plans to take supplies aboard in the south Pacific in September.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo is being once more advised that supplies from home bases must not be expected. The attaché is requested to submit suggestions for the proposed supply operation. (Telegram 1522.)

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

The air activity over the Bay of Biscay was normal with 25 planes operating.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Lorient and Bordeaux were attacked by considerable forces during the day. The raid on Bordeaux came as a complete surprise and without any preceding alert. As a result of the demolition of the south lock the harbor basins "1" and "2" have been completely drained and the wharf there collapsed. The Italian base has, therefore, been practically paralyzed. The electricity supply to the submarine pens has broken down. Blockade runners were not hit. No planes were shot down.

At Lorient, the naval hospital was hit and workshops in the dockyard were demolished. The electricity and water supply has partially broken down. Nine planes were shot down by fighters.

Two heavy anti-aircraft batteries of the 3rd Air Force are transferred from St. Nazaire to Bordeaux as from 17 May.

The mouth of the Loire has been closed because of danger from mines.

Channel Area:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Over the Dutch area, six planes were shot down during the day by naval anti-aircraft artillery.

A convoy was attacked with 30 to 40 bombs and torpedo planes off Vlieland in the afternoon, and the steamer KYPHISSIA, one minesweeper, and one patrol boat were sunk by torpedoes.

An additional patrol boat was sunk by aerial torpedo off Borkum. The plane was shot down.

Convoy traffic ran to schedule. Ship "5" has been transferred from the Hook to the Elbe.

Special Items.

I. The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North reports that following today's severe air attack on the convoy off Vlieland he no longer considers the convoy traffic to the Netherlands possible without continuous and adequate fighter escort. He requests fighter escort for the prescribed route. Naval Station North supports this request (Telegrams 1831 and 2244).

Complete suspension of this sea traffic is not possible. For further information see under 18 May.

II. Admiral, North Sea Station submitted a review of the defense situation in the Frisian islands and requests considerable reinforcement of the defense as regards equipment and material and the allocation of trained army troops. Naval Staff holds the following view regarding this:

Landings from the sea both on the mainland and the islands off shore are at present considered very unlikely. Landings from the air are possible at any time but are likewise hardly to be expected at present.

The requests made by Admiral, North Sea Station are fully appreciated, but reinforcements to the requested extent as regards personnel and material, must, for the present, be shelved. The defense of important objectives, however, (location gear, airfields etc.) will be reinforced as far as possible. (Copy as per 1/Skl Op. 12751/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance reports:

Off Cape Gorodetski 4 steamers, 1 destroyer, and 4 escort vessels;
in the Orlovski Bay 3 steamers, and 3 escort vessels;
between Cape Gorodetski and Yokonga 8 patrol vessels;
off Cape Teriberski 2 ships;
off the Kandalakscha Bay 1 steamer;
off Jan Mayen no sightings;
west of the Faeroes a Swedish merchantman on westerly course;
north of Iceland off the island of Grimsoe 2 patrol boats;
on the northwestern corner of the island 1 merchantman on easterly course and 4 fishing smacks.

The photographic reconnaissance over Scapa had to be broken off because of weather conditions and an engine break-down.

There was a slight exchange of fire with the Russian batteries on the Ribachi peninsula on 15 May. Russian submarines off the Norwegian arctic coast were informed of German destroyers off the North Cape, according to the radio intelligence. Three planes were detected over the North Sea and seven planes of the Iceland squadrons.

Own Situation:

In the small hours of the morning of 17 May the tanker EUROSTAD (1,118 BRT) was sunk by a submarine in spite of an escort of three patrol boats, three submarine chasers, and planes.

The second sector of the UMB barrage off Nordkyn has been laid according to plan.

Twenty-five ships were escorted north and 24 south.

Special Items.

Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submits a review of the convoy traffic between Iceland and Murmansk since September 1942 (1/Skl 14006/43 Gkdos.).

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Brisk traffic of tugs and barges between Kronstadt and Lissi Noss. There were 34 guard ships in the area of the Sea Canal, a portion apparently engaged in minesweeping.

2. Own Situation:

Five steamers, one tanker, and one submarine were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic, and eight vessels and one minesweeping plane were assigned to sweep the channels.

The ferry service Sassnitz - Trelleborg was resumed on 17 May.

A supplement to the report on the air raid on Kiel states that the Germania shipyard, which at first ceased to operate entirely, has resumed its operations at approximately 70 % capacity as from 17 May. The large floating dock No. 13 will be out of commission for about 2 1/2 months, the loss in material is considerable.

The minelayer KAISER is en route to Travemuende.

The "Seeigel" barrage "31" has been laid according to plan.

The submarine patrol behind the barrages is normal. Reval (Tallinn) Bay has been swept clear of mines and the order for compulsory employment of a pilot rescinded. There was no clearance work done off Windau and in the "Warthburg" barrages because of the weather conditions. The troop transports to Finland ran to schedule.

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

A reliable agent reports from Iceland that a convoy of nine heavily loaded ships put in to Reykjavik in the forenoon of 14 May.

2. Own Situation:

In the central North Atlantic an eastbound SC convoy is expected, against which three groups, the "Donau 1" and "2" and the "Oder", have been set up in patrol line.

One boat detected only neutral shipping off Cape Hatteras and started on her return passage without having scored any successes.

One boat sank two ships totalling 10,000 BRT out of a convoy of six ships putting out of Durban.

The second and third Italian transport submarines left on 16 May. One of the boats was forced to return to Bordeaux because of damage to the rudder.

Special Items.

The fitting out of three submarines to serve as anti-aircraft decoys has been ordered. The boats are to be ready to sail about the end of May, mid-July, and mid-August. (1/Skl 14334/43 Gkdos.)

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

One Sunderland was shot down over the Bay of Biscay, and one Whitley off Cape Finisterre.

Fifteen fighter-bombers were on individual harassing raids over London during the night of 17 May. Cardiff was raided by 74 planes.

There was brisk air activity over the western area by day. Two Spitfires were shot down during an attack on an airfield. In the course of a raid on the gas-works at Amsterdam fighters shot down two of the raiders, anti-aircraft artillery six. Trains in northwestern Germany were machine-gunned by planes on night operations over Reich territory.

2. Mediterranean Area and Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

A supplementary report on the raid on the valley dams states that the raiders flew in in a low-level attack and were not detected either by plane reporting or night fighter controlling gear. Only one of the attacked valley dams was protected by light anti-aircraft fire. It is not known yet what type of explosive was employed (torpedo, or mines, or bombs ?).

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

On 17 May, two convoys, one of eleven freighters and one of 17 freighters and three tankers, put in to Gibraltar. Ceuta reports that ten or more large vessels passed eastward during the night of 16 May. The following vessels passed Ceuta in the small hours of the morning: 56 freighters, 7 tankers, 1 transporter, and 10 escort vessels all eastbound, which were joined by a few other vessels from Gibraltar.

Tres Forcas reports the following vessels eastbound in the evening of 17 May:

42 large and 45 medium freighters, 2 tankers, and apparently 5 battleships (the last item is doubtful).

Air reconnaissance sighted 23 merchantmen and 9 escort vessels entering Oran, and reports 1 destroyer off Bizerta, 3 destroyers off Monastir, and 5 ships southwest of Marsala, eastbound.

Enemy submarines were off Pantelleria and Maddalena on 17 May.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four Italian submarines are in the operational area.

The PT boat S "56" in tow of a naval landing craft is en route from Leghorn to Toulon.

There were no enemy planes over Italy on 17 May.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

One vessel carrying German troops arrived in Sardinia and one carrying German supplies in Sicily, according to a report from the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South.

Special Items.

I. The German Naval Command, Italy informs the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South that the minefields laid for the defense of the coast are not effective against shallow draft vessels, and that a protection in this respect can only be achieved by minelaying on the beach and obstacles on land. (Telegram 1945).

II. The German Naval Command, Italy reports that nearly 50 % of the naval officers and enlisted men who were engaged in Tunisia returned safely. (Telegram 1250.)

III. The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Quartermaster Division has ordered that five freighters and three tankers which are no longer needed in the central Mediterranean are to be transferred to the Aegean Sea as quickly as possible. (Telegram 2010.)

IV. The German Naval Command, Italy reports that one barge carrying TMB's and TMC's without firing device fell into the hands of the enemy in Bizerta. (Telegram 1835.)

V. Naval Staff informs the German Naval Command, Italy of the Italian plan to declare new operational areas in the Mediterranean. (For details see 1/Skl I ca 13925/43 Gkdos.)

VI. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch has issued the order for the establishment of a German Naval Command, Toulon. (1/Skl 14455/43 geh.)

VII. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South transmitted a detailed assessment of the situation in the western Mediterranean as on 4 May. In it he comes to the conclusion that a landing on Sardinia must be expected. (1/Skl 13784/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

VIII. Laval informed the German Consulate General in Vichy that the Allies are preparing operations against the northern coast of the Mediterranean in the near future. (3/Skl 1814/43 Gkdos.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

During the night of 16 May one steamer en route from Milos to Piraeus was attacked without success by two torpedo planes. This was the first night attack with aerial torpedoes in the Aegean Sea. The minelayer BARLETTA has been en route from Piraeus to Brindisi since 16 May.

The convoy traffic was carried out to schedule.

Special Items.

The Commanding Admiral, Aegean reports plans for minelaying off Calamata (1/Skl 1467/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance observed only slight shipping off the Caucasian coast.

One submarine was located south of Novorossisk; one submarine was sighted off Eupatoria.

The bombing raids on Sennaia, Taman, and Anapa did not cause any damage.

Own Situation:

Four PT boats were operating off Tuapse in the evening of 17 May. The naval artillery lighter MAL "1" is in Kerch, the MAL "2" en route from Kerch to Temriuk.

The ferry service ran to schedule.

Special Items.

With regard to the armament of the Rumanian river monitors on the Danube, Naval Staff, Operations Division informs the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch that the armament is urgently needed and that the Fleet Branch should, if possible, meet with this request. (1/Skl III a 14551/43 geh.)

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The Japanese Liaison Officer has passed on Japanese operational experiences in night engagements. Night attacks employing well trained formations achieve particularly favorable results. If night attacks by destroyers and torpedo boats are brought to a halt by enemy light naval forces, then our own cruisers and, if necessary, also our battleships must clear the way to the main enemy forces for our torpedo carrying units. Apart from a high standard of training, maximum speed and frequent alteration of course are the only means of protection for heavy ships.

According to the Japanese Liaison Officer the maximum speed of the Japanese destroyers is 36 knots, which can be maintained for four hours at least.

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Items of Political Importance.

The military commentator of "The Times" gave a preview of the coming Allied offensive. He considers the establishment of a bridgehead in northern France as being the best solution possible, as a conquest of Italy represents a tremendous undertaking should the Germans decide to support the Italian Army with ten German divisions. The strategic reserve is the most important thing where the Axis powers are concerned. If they should succeed in withdrawing 15 or 20 divisions from the Russian front, then the Allied advance in Europe can only proceed at a very slow pace. The greatest problem is that of ships, and it is very important to secure a bridgehead of considerable depth with a serviceable harbor. The problem is by no means an insoluble one for the Allies, and the defense of such a large area as is held by the Axis is very well outside their powers with the resources at their disposal.

According to an agent's report it is possible that an Anglo-American offensive against the Azores is imminent. A Portuguese general is supposed to have passed this information on to a group of senior officers and to have stated that the Portuguese Armed Forces would defend the neutrality of their country.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports on the request from the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North that the convoys to the Netherlands should be restricted because of the strong enemy air superiority. It is to be noted in this connection that the Ministry of Transportation has already arranged for as much of the transport traffic as possible to go via land and canal routes, but that, however, the requirements cannot be met on these routes alone, and that the convoys must be maintained. The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North will therefore be ordered to continue the convoy traffic to the Netherlands. It will have to be investigated to what extent the safety of the convoys can be increased by making use of dark nights and weather conditions which are unfavorable for PT boat operations. Naval Staff will once more draw the attention of the Armed Forces High Command and the Commander in Chief, Air to the danger from the air to which the Netherlands convoys are exposed. (See Telegram 1711.)

II. The laying of net barrages for the valley dams is being carried out by the Air Force. The material will be supplied by the Navy.

The Chief of Naval Ordnance Division, Bureau of Naval Armament reports that two years ago the defense of the valley dams was thoroughly checked, whereby it was found that the explosive charge of a torpedo was not sufficient to inflict serious damage to the dams.

III. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports a case of sabotage at Elbing. Steel scrap was found in the lubricating oil for torpedo boats. An investigation is being made.

A request has been submitted for the transfer of the battery "Tirpitz" to southern France. This battery was expressly promised to the Rumanians by the Fuehrer, and assigned to the defense of Constanta. The Chief of Naval Staff decides that the battery is to remain in Constanta.

Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

IV. The Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports Group South's minelaying plans for the west coast of the Peleponnesos (see War Diary, Part A, 17 May).

V. It may be inferred from the British Admiralty's announcement concerning the sinking of the REGENSBURG in the Denmark Strait by the cruiser GLASGOW that the Denmark Strait is constantly guarded in some manner unknown to us. Reconnaissance by submarines has not yielded a clear picture in this connection. Superior location facilities are, here too, very likely to be the enemy's greatest help. The question of betrayal, which has been raised, must be answered in the negative because of the particular measures which were taken to safeguard secrecy in this case. The enemy can gain a pretty good idea by calculating the position of the blockade-runners, as he knows the exact time of their departure from the Japanese area. The Chief, Naval Staff has ordered that special importance be attached to rendering such calculations more difficult for the enemy by the insertion of waiting periods.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff, Operations Division informs Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division that, according to the decision of the Commander in Chief, Navy, no further PT boats are to be transferred to the Mediterranean, but that as many naval landing craft as possible be kept assigned to the Mediterranean instead (1/Skl I op. 14385/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. d.)

II. The Fuehrer has ordered that a working staff for an Army group command is to be set up for special assignments under the command of Field Marshal Rommel.

Field Marshal Rommel will be directly responsible to the Fuehrer (1/Skl 14404/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.)

III. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submits information on the tactics of British and Norwegian PT boats gained from captured material. (1/Skl 15164/43 geh. in War Diary, Appendix "Foreign Navies".)

Situation 18 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

According to a report from Buenos Aires, three Brazilian gunboats are at present lying in Montevideo, which will possibly relieve U.S. warships stationed there.

2. Own Situation:

The British Admiralty officially announces the capture and scuttling of the two blockade-runners IRENE and REGENSBURG. This announcement brings the first details to become known about the loss of the REGENSBURG, which apparently took place at the end of March. She had been cornered in the Denmark Strait by the cruiser GLASGOW. The crew scuttled the ship and took to the boats. Because of the heavy sea and icy weather the GLASGOW was only able to rescue six survivors of the crew. The loss of the REGENSBURG proves that the Naval Staff's assumption, based on submarine reconnaissance, was wrong, i.e. that a break-through the Denmark Strait was possible if the element of surprise were exploited.

The ALSTERUFER, the second of the three blockade-runners that left on 29 March, put into Batavia on 13 May. Naval Staff sent confirmation of this fact to the ALSTERUFER in Radiogram 1723, which had been reported by the Naval Attaché, Tokyo. The PORTLAND, the third of the blockade-runners, was, as already reported, seized by a French cruiser in the central Atlantic.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Brisk reconnaissance in the Bay of Biscay with 31 planes operating. The photographic reconnaissance over the British coast showed the following: 8 steamers at Cardiff, 4 harbor defense vessels, 16 harbor and coastal vessels, and 3 small coastal freighters at Cowes, 8 landing craft at Chichester, 16 steamers off Chichester, 2 steamers off Queenstown, 1 large warship, presumably a cruiser, at Dover.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast Area:

A supplementary report on the air raids of 15 May states that at Lorient the transformer station "Basse Loire" and a ship were seriously damaged. In many places the water pipes have burst and the tracks of the harbor railroad pitted.

In Bordeaux, in addition to the damage already reported, the lock bridge received a direct hit, placing it out of commission. The small lock will probably be working again on 20 May.

Channel Area:

Four-engined bombers attacked a minesweeping group off Nieuport during the night of 17 May without inflicting any particular damage. Twin-engined bombers attacked another minesweeping group off Gravelines, inflicting slight damage.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

A total of five planes was shot down during the air attack on the convoy on 17 May.

The escort duties in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out as planned.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance over Jan Mayen, north of the Faeroes, and south of Iceland was without result. The following vessels were sighted: 1 freighter off Bielomorsk, 5 medium-sized steamers, 2 destroyers, and 5 guard ships off Cape Gorodetski, 6 patrol boats off the Kola peninsula. Six planes were operating over the North Sea, none of the Iceland squadrons were operating.

According to the radio intelligence only one submarine appeared off the Arctic coast.

Enemy planes were reported near Bergen and from the Lister - Farsund area.

Own Situation:

The report on the damage to the tanker HOLSTEIN is supplemented to the effect that it was not caused by bombs but by a torpedo.

The minesweeper which was sunk by sabotage in the harbor of Kopervik has been raised and is being transferred to Stavanger.

Seventeen ships were escorted north and 22 south.

Special Items.

Naval Staff approved of the minefields in the Bodoe area requested by Naval Command, Norway. (1/Skl I E 14124/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Four guard ships were observed dropping depth charges in the Leningrad sea canal in the evening of 17 May. Later on a submarine left westbound under heavy escort and cover of smoke screen. Fire from our own batteries was without result. Thirty-two guard ships were observed in Kronstadt Bay. Fifteen guard ships, six motor minesweepers, and three smaller vessels were lying off Lavansaari. Off Seiskari 31 vessels under air escort were sailing west. Motor minesweepers were engaged in clearing mines off Schepel.

2. Own Situation:

One steamer, two tankers, and one submarine were escorted within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Eleven vessels were on operations sweeping the channels. One mine was cleared off Copenhagen. The clearance work in the minefield "Warthburg III" has been suspended because of the weather conditions, as was the laying of the minefield "Seeigel 31 a". The anti-submarine patrol behind the minefields was normal.

The exercise area for the 27th Submarine Flotilla has been opened up east of 90° 40' E as far as the northern limit of the Oeland declared area. The troop and leave personnel transports to Finland ran to schedule.

V. Merchant Shipping.

The Foreign Office announces that the sale of the German ships lying in Portuguese East and West Africa to Portugal has been concluded. (1/Skl 15085/43 geh.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

According to an agent's report the following convoys are said to

be either en route, or planned:

1. a convoy of about 50 vessels northbound about 220 miles northeast of Teneriffa at 1800 on 16 May;

2. a large convoy under escort of warships from Atlantic city (U.S.A.) to England - Northern Ireland. Departure on 4 June.

2. Own Situation:

Group "Donau" has intercepted the expected SC convoy. The conditions for combat are unfavorable because of the calm and bright nights with full moon.

The sixth submarine entering the Cape area is to steer in long legs for the south coast of Madagascar and to carry out attacks under cover of the coast.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff, Submarine Division submits the operational order for the first two anti-aircraft submarines. Their main assignment will be combat against enemy planes in the Bay of Biscay as far as 15° W and serving as anti-aircraft escort for damaged boats. (1/Skl 13622/43 Gkdos.)

II. The Commander, Submarines, Norway reports the efficiency degree of the submarines in April 1943. With 19 boats on operations not one was able to achieve a success. (1/Skl 14347/43 Gkdos.)

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

In the western area 220 planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating, in the Mediterranean five planes. Seven enemy planes were shot down.

Nine fighter-bombers were operating over London during the night of 18 May.

By day, 87 enemy planes were operating over the western area. Planes were seen to drop mines in the entrance to Brest harbor. There were no planes over Reich territory.

2. Mediterranean Area:

There were 197 planes of the 2nd Air Force operating. Fifteen enemy planes were shot down, three of our own failed to return.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

In the evening of 17 May, three freighters under escort of three destroyers left Gibraltar for the Mediterranean. One cruiser put into port in the morning of 18 May, coming from the east.

Vessels, presumably landing craft, with lights dimmed passed the Straits of Gibraltar eastbound, according to an Italian report.

The five battleships reported as forming part of yesterday's large-scale convoy are five large warships whose type has not been identified.

Air reconnaissance detected a portion of this large-scale convoy in the forenoon of 18 May, consisting of about 40 to 60 ships on course east, north of Oran and reported the convoy 25 miles northwest of Cape Tenes in the evening.

Photographic reconnaissance over Oran showed numerous small vessels in addition to 20 steamers, nine passenger steamers, and two tankers.

During the night of 18 May, six destroyers and seven landing craft were sighted off Cape Bon.

The reconnaissance between Sidi Barani and Ras el Kebir was without enemy sighting. Five steamers and seven escort vessels were sighted off Alexandria. One ship was on fire in front of the harbor.

Between 22° and 27° E enemy submarines are reported to be assembling along 36° N in readiness for massed operations.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four Italian submarines are in the operational area.

One of our own submarines torpedoed two steamers totalling 16,000 BRT out of the large convoy, about 30 miles northwest of Cape Tenes. During the night of 17 May, the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla carried out three minelaying tasks south of Sicily and was on this occasion attacked with bombs. One boat had to be towed into port because of an engine breakdown. The torpedo boats of foreign origin TA "9" and "10" put into Spezia from Leghorn. The engines of both boats have broken down. The German Special Staff, therefore, issued orders for them to transfer immediately to Toulon for repairs. Two motor minesweepers have likewise been ordered to Toulon for overhauling.

Three formerly French motor boats assigned to the Aegean Sea put into Crotonne in the evening of 18 May.

Vice Admiral Ruge takes over the duties of the Commander, German Naval Command, Italy as from 18 May.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

Two submarine chasers are escorting three tank lighters from Monaco to Genoa. The submarine chaser "2207" in Naples is once more out of commission because of engine breakdown. A submarine chaser is escorting the steamer LUCERA from Naples to Catania.

Special Items.

I. The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Quartermaster Division issues an order for the setting up and transfer to Italy of harbor companies and construction battalions.

This measure was prompted by the action of the Commander in Chief, Navy who reported to the Fuehrer that the improvement of the harbors and manning them with German personnel is the prerequisite for all future operations and the shipment of supplies to the islands. For details see 1/Skl 14452/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.

II. The small shipping at present in the Italian area is not sufficient to meet the demands made upon the transport facilities to the islands. Therefore, additional shipping space must be procured, for which freight and tank peniches from the French area will best answer the purpose. The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Quartermaster Division has issued a relevant order and requested the Commanding Admiral, Group West and the authorities concerned to support the drive with all available means. The Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping is responsible for making the peniches available (see Telegram 1145).

Group West submits the report on a meeting during which the procurement and shipment of the peniches was discussed with the Deputy for German Sea Transportation in the Mediterranean.

The Group points out that false hopes are raised in the report, as a portion of the barges to be commandeered are not ready to sail, and reports that the Naval Office, Marseilles is not in the position to man the "Seeloewe" barges requested by the Navy, thus making them operational. (See Telegram 2245.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

It has been reported retrospectively that a small sailing craft was stopped by an enemy submarine on 15 May. No details have been received.

Own Situation:

The escort duties were carried out to schedule. The Spanish steamer RIGEL (549 BRT) ran aground southwest of Salonica.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

There was only slight shipping off the Caucasian coast on 18 May, according to air reconnaissance. One destroyer was sighted off Sukhum, and four boats south of the beachhead.

One submarine was located 40 miles southwest of Novorossisk.

Own Situation:

The 1st PT Boat Flotilla did not sight anything off Tuapse during the night of 17 May. The coastal defense operation off the Temriuk Bay had to be suspended because of weather conditions.

The naval artillery lighters MAL "1" and "3" are under repair in Kerch, the MAL "2" put into Temriuk. The ferry service ran to schedule. One naval landing craft belonging to an Anapa transport was sunk by bombs in the afternoon of 18 May.

IX. Situation East Asia.

The Japanese Admiralty reports: During the night of 11 May a place in the central Solomons was shelled by enemy naval forces. One enemy vessel hit a mine and sank. In the course of an aerial combat north of Guadalcanal, 38 enemy planes were shot down. On 13 and 15 May Japanese attacks were directed against airfields on Guadalcanal, and on 14 May one against the Oro Bay, where transports and ammunition supplies were set on fire. Fifteen enemy planes were shot down.

Three to four thousand U.S. troops have landed on Attu. The resistance of the Japanese troops is guaranteed by supplies on hand. The fighting is continuing. On the American side the following vessels took part:

1 battleship, 2 heavy and 3 light cruisers, 1 auxiliary carrier, and 10 destroyers. One enemy destroyer was beached on Attu after being hit by a submarine. The possession of their airfield on Amchitka gives the Americans air superiority.

The Japanese have only a few sea planes stationed on Kiska. On account of the continuous fog, operations by the Japanese Air Force from northern Japanese airfields and the Kurile islands have so far been without success.

Japanese submarines sunk five further vessels by 15 May.

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Chief of Staff, Naval Staff reports that Admiral Bertoldi as spokesman for the Italian Navy considers that the island of Corfu represents a favorable objective for the enemy. In World War I Corfu served the enemy as an important base. At present Italian troops are on the island, but their strength is not known here.

Chief, Naval Staff considers that the enemy might make a landing on this island with a reasonable chance of success as long as we have no adequate forces available on the mainland behind it. On a theoretical basis it has to be borne in mind that the enemy faces a battle in Italy which may be extraordinarily tough and of long duration, and that a surprise landing in this part of the Balkans would quickly bring the enemy closer to his main objective, the Balkans. It is, however, very unlikely that the enemy will execute such an operation, as all signs point to a main attack against the Italian islands.

To investigate this question, a report on the distribution of our own fighting strength in the Balkans was arranged for the following day.

II. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that the Fuehrer's order concerning ammunition consumption of the anti-aircraft artillery reads to the effect that the anti-aircraft artillery is to fire on enemy planes with all available means whenever they are within effective range (see War Diary, Part A, 17 May).

III. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that torpedo nets together with work commandos are being supplied by the Navy for the protection of the valley dams.

The Chief of Naval Ordnance Division, Bureau of Naval Armament reports in this connection that explosive tests at a valley dam proved the explosive charge of a torpedo to be far too weak, thus making their use against these dams appear unlikely. Therefore the laying of anti-torpedo nets would be a waste of time. Considering the shortage of material such nets are far more urgently required for naval purposes in other places. The Chief of Naval Staff has arranged that Rear Admiral Voss is to settle the question at Fuehrer Headquarters.

IV. The Chief of Naval Intelligence, Naval Staff reports that following the conclusion of the battles in Africa there are at present about 142,000 German prisoners in British hands as against 80,000 Britons in German hands.

The enemy is at present spreading rumors in a very obvious manner about intentions of the King of Italy to abdicate and a tendency in certain Italian quarters to make peace.

The Spanish High Commissioner in Tangier, General Orgaz, is of the opinion that the enemy landings in the Mediterranean are not to be expected for several weeks, and that one may count on an offensive against France.

Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

V. The Chief of Operations Division, Naval Staff reports that the Air Force is now planning to use the new types of mine-firing devices (mutual conductance firing), and that the Naval Staff raises no objections and has agreed with the Air Force plans.

Special Items.

I. The Armed Forces High Command, Intelligence Division has furnished an exact report on the way in which the British documents fell into Spanish hands, and that following their perusal the documents were treated with special care in a manner which made it impossible to recognize that the papers had been opened. The papers were returned to the British via the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in their original state. (1/Skl 14712/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. Naval Staff, Operations Division passes on to Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch views expressed on a request from Group West with regard to the construction of new mine exploding vessels, and requests two replacements immediately, and later, one replacement on the Atlantic coast. (1/Skl III a 12993/43 Gkdos.)

Situation 19 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

1. Enemy Situation:

According to a Japanese report, a convoy carrying Canadian troops and war materiel, apparently consigned to Australia, left Philadelphia in mid-April making in the direction of Panama.

2. Own Situation:

The Reuter naval correspondent publishes a review of the German

blockade-runner traffic and its importance to Germany and Japan, and estimates that as a result of ships sunk about 30,000 t of caoutchouc and 5,000 t of tin were lost to Germany.

Ship "28" left Kobe on 17 May in order to proceed to Batavia after bunkering in a Japanese port on the way.

Naval Staff informs Group North and Group West of the news received of late concerning the loss of the REGENSBURG, KARIN, and PORTLAND stating that her expectations as regards break-throughs via the Denmark Strait, which were based on submarine reconnaissance, have not been fulfilled. (1/Skl 14475/43 Gkdos.)

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Our air reconnaissance reports one steamer off Folkestone and 15 small merchantmen and a number of guard ships off Dungeness.

Thirty five planes of the 19th Group were on flights over the outer Bay of Biscay.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

The large lock that was damaged during the air raid on Bordeaux has been sealed off by a lock-gate. It is estimated that the small lock will be serviceable by 21 May by the dismantling of the damaged swing-bridge.

The entrance to La Pallice has been closed because of suspected danger of mines. One mine was swept there.

Channel Area:

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

Group West submits a brief report on the sinking of the submarine chaser "2213" (Telegram 0130) and details concerning the bomb damage in Bordeaux and Lorient. (Telegrams 0228 and 0235.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Five mines were swept off the Frisian islands.

The escort and defense duties within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out without any special incident.

Special Items.

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North reports his plans concerning the order to continue the Netherlands convoy traffic and sees a considerable increase in the fighter escort as the only immediate effective help.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

The reconnaissance between the north coast of Iceland and 68° N westward as far as the ice limit was without sighting.

According to radio monitoring, 15 planes were operating over the North Sea and 15 in the region of Iceland.

Own Situation:

During the submarine attack on the tanker EUROSTAD the steamer WARTHELAND was damaged by an unexploded torpedo.

On 19 May the Norwegian steamer SANEW sank by her stern following an explosion at the quayside in Moss. An investigation is in progress.

Twenty-five ships were escorted north and 19 south.

Special Items.

I. Group North is to request the Commanding Admiral, Northern Waters to investigate the possibility of establishing improved communication facilities between Narvik and the Air Commander Lofoten at Banak. (1/Skl 1359/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

II. The Commanding Admiral, Task Force, requested that the task force should carry out an operation against the Kola coast, if the PQ convoy had not arrived by 20 May. Group North consented to this suggestion and now reports that in the past few days reconnaissance of the Kola coast detected only slight coastal traffic and a small alternating number of ships assembled in Yokonga. In view of the strained fuel situation the commitment of the task force is regarded as not sufficiently justified. The Group continues

to collect data for such an operation, in order to carry it out at a later date, if possible. Naval Staff agrees with the points made by Group North. (1/Skl 1476/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

The breakwater fairway to Leningrad was camouflaged with nets during the night. Two freighters, two tugs, and 28 small craft were sighted off Schepel on westerly course.

An air raid on Reval (Tallinn) took place causing slight damage. The dropping of mines was observed off Nargoen.

2. Own Situation:

Within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic five steamers, one tanker, and one submarine were escorted. Seventeen vessels and two magnetic minesweeping planes were assigned to sweep the channels.

One mine was swept off Malmoe, one off Vinga, and one off Laesoe.

An air attack on the dockyards in Flensburg took place at noon on 19 May. Both dockyards are ablaze; one coastal defense vessel and two other boats were seriously damaged. Kiel was attacked at the same time and bombs dropped on the outskirts of the town, as the town itself was well screened with smoke. Ten planes were reported shot down.

The reinforcement of the barrages "Seeigel 32" and "31" with cutting floats was carried out. One mine was swept south of Reipo. One minesweeper ran aground because of damage to the rudder gear. The minesweeping operations had to be broken off because of weather conditions.

The ADMIRAL SCHEER is en route from Swinemuende eastbound. The tanker HEIDE and the destroyer Z "38" are en route from Swinemuende westbound.

Special Items.

I. The Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic consents to the request made by the Armed Forces, Operations Staff, Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces Overseas for the transfer of the leave personnel traffic from Reval (Tallinn) to Baltic Port. (Telegram 0302.)

II. Naval Staff, Operations Division states in a brief review that vessels up to the size of flotilla leaders can be transferred on the Neva River from Kronstadt Bay to Lake Ladoga.

V. Merchant Shipping.

I. Naval Staff requested Naval Station Baltic to report whether, to what extent, and under what conditions it would be possible after the 100 per cent clearance sweep to re-open the Oeland area which has hitherto been a declared area to merchant shipping and fishing.

In this connection Naval Station Baltic reports that following a thorough check with the Commanding Admiral, Submarines the area cannot be re-opened to merchant shipping because of the interference it would cause to submarine training and the touching off of frequent anti-submarine alerts on sighting our own submarines. There are no objections to the re-opening of the declared area to fishing. Naval Staff is going to shelve the matter for the time being. (1/Skl 14394/43 Gkdos.)

II. The Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping has sent the minutes of a meeting that took place because of the shipping difficulties in the Mediterranean on the east coast of Spain. As no adequate protection can be furnished because of lack of escort vessels, it is intended to transport as much goods as possible to Germany by rail. A certain amount of shipping will, however, still be required. Naval Staff is requested to supply a special escort for the floating cranes to be transferred from Sete to Port Vendre. (1/Skl 15179/43 geh.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

According to an agent's report several large tankers left Tampico about 20 May to join a convoy for Gibraltar.

2. Own Situation:

The operation of Group "Donau" against the SC convoy is greatly impaired because of strong air and naval escort. The operation continues.

Group "Oder" will be launched on 21 May against the HX convoy which is expected on the basis of a special radio intercept report.

Two boats which were assigned to a break-through into the Mediterranean on 5 May did not report in spite of being requested to do so. The boats had already been reported by the enemy Air Force west of the Straits of Gibraltar; they must be presumed lost.

Enemy planes attacked a submarine south of Madeira; it is possible that it was the submarine U "182" returning from the Cape area, which has failed to report in spite of requests to do so.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff, Submarine Division reports that the proposed landing of an agent in Iceland will only be possible by dark and, therefore, not until after 20 Aug. at the earliest. (Telegram 2230.)

II. Naval Staff, Submarine Division has submitted the operational order for the fouling of the convoy routes off St. John's (1/Skl 1419/43 Gkdos. Chefs.).

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

One hundred and seventy four planes of the 3rd Air Force, 130 of which were fighters, were operating over the western area, six planes over the Mediterranean. A number of enemy planes were over the western area by day without any special attacks; they were apparently on operations to tie down fighters in preparation for the attack on Kiel.

Freight trains in France were machine-gunned from the air during the night. Over Reich territory there were only harassing raids during the night.

Eight of our fighter-bombers attacked London during the night.

2. Mediterranean Area:

On 18 May there were no German bomber formations operating.

According to a belated report in the course of the raid on Jijelli during the night of 17 May, one ship of 3,000 BRT was hit and further hits were scored on the quay installations and boats.

Italian planes torpedoed three large steamers off Oran during the night of 18 May, also shipping in the harbor of Jijelli. Bone was attacked by Italian bombers during the night of 17 May.

Four to five planes flew over the area of Sofia - Belgrade - Scoplie during the night of 18 May.

3. Eastern Front:

The Volga River was fouled with mines during the nights of 17 and 18 May. Air reconnaissance again confirmed heavy shipping on the Volga.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

Tangier reports two very large and fast units passing from west to east during the night of 18 May. A convoy of 20 ships coming from the Mediterranean put into Gibraltar on 19 May. Another convoy of eleven transports passed Gibraltar bound for the Atlantic. The cruiser of the COLOMBO class which put into Gibraltar on 18 May left again on 19 May for the Mediterranean.

No reports have been received on the large eastbound convoy. A German plane sighted at least 40 merchantmen and escort vessels northwest of Oran in the evening of 18 May.

Air reconnaissance reports the following:

north of Cape Bon: 3 destroyers;

north of Bougie: 2 tankers, 2 light cruisers, 4 destroyers on easterly course;

northeast of Dellys: 9 steamers, 9 patrol boats on westerly course;

northeast of Alexandria: 1 passenger steamer, 3 freighters, 3 patrol boats.

Submarines were reported as follows:

On 18 May off Pantelleria and Nice, on 19 May off San Remo, Nice, and northeast of Messina.

Enemy army and naval forces carried out a joint exercise east of Bone during the night of 17 May, according to a report from the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South.

The reconnaissance around Cyprus did not result in any enemy sightings.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

The French mail steamer GENERAL BONAPARTE (2,796 BRT) displaying

neutrality markings was torpedoed by a submarine south of San Remo. Roughly 110 passengers are missing.

Ten auxiliary motor minesweepers arrived in Toulon from Marseilles.

Six French vessels put into Italian ports between 23 Apr. and 13 May. In this way 120 French vessels totalling 429,229 BRT and 25 neutral vessels totalling 94,180 BRT have so far been transferred from French ports to Italy.

In the course of an attack on the airfield of Trapani on 19 May seven attacking planes were shot down, two of our own planes were destroyed, several planes damaged. During attacks on Milis and Villa Cidro (Sicily) seven planes were also shot down, with slight damage to ourselves. During the night of 19 May, there was a renewed attack on Villa Cidro; details have not yet been received.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The escort duties between Palermo and Naples were carried out without any special incident.

The war transport KT "22" carried 400 t of fuel to Cagliari.

The escort duties to Sardinia were carried out according to plan. The German steamer SANTA FE (4,627 BRT) ran aground in the entrance to Zara (Pola) on 17 May.

Special Items.

I. Vice Admiral Ruge reports having taken command of the German Naval Command, Italy as from 18 May 1943, and that the German Special Staff attached to the Italian Admiralty has been absorbed by the German Naval Command, Italy.

II. The Chief of the German Naval Command, Italy reports the result of his personal tour through Sardinia. The ports of Sardinia, except for Cagliari are only slightly damaged. Only one steamer can at present discharge its cargo in Cagliari. The discharging of small vessels is possible at various places along the coast of Sardinia. Lighters, however, are lacking in all the Sardinian harbors. (1/Skl 14583/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

III. The German Naval Command, Italy has instructed the 6th Escort Flotilla to hasten the operational readiness of the minelayers BRANDENBURG and POMMERN, as both vessels are wanted for minelaying operations as soon as possible. (Telegram 1425.)

IV. In the weekly report of the Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division on the situation in the western Mediterranean, the available landing craft according

to the photographic reconnaissance on 16 May is worth noting:

3 LSI's - 59 LST's
(in the Oran - Algiers area)

107 LCI's - 159 LCT's of various sizes
(in the Bougie - Jijelli area).

(Telegram ~~1712~~).

V. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South has sent the text of the enemy leaflet dropped over Rome calling upon Italy to make peace. (Telegram 2108.)

VI. With regard to the laying of minefields on the south coast of France Group West has been instructed by Naval Staff to the arrange that the laying of the barrages "H 4" and "H 3" is to be temporarily postponed in view of the passage of Red Cross ships from Cape St. Sebastian to Planier. It is proposed to direct the Red Cross traffic at a distance of three miles along the south coast of France. The Group is being requested to investigate the possibility of using Port Vendres as port of destination for the Red Cross ships. (1/Skl I E 14481/43 Gkdos.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The minelayers DRACHE, BULGARIA, and three German submarine chasers left on a special operation on 19 May.

The Spanish steamer RIGEL which ran aground near the mouth of the Vardar River was refloated with the help of a tug, and put into Salonica.

The convoy traffic was without any special incident.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff has informed the Naval Attaché, Madrid of Group South's request to relieve the crews of the Spanish steamers in the Aegean Sea without delay and to change the flags. The Naval Attaché is being requested to take the necessary steps immediately (Telegram 1712.)

II. Group South requests the Commanding Admiral, Aegean to get into touch with the X Air Corps and to settle the following questions:

a. Reconnaissance of harbors between Benghazi and Port Said, and over the sea area east of Malta;

b. Aerial mine fouling of the harbors from Lybia to Egypt.

c. Attacks on the landing formations in their bases.

The Commanding Admiral, Aegean is, furthermore, to investigate and prepare the initiation of a patrol service off Crete, and the establishment of well-stocked PT boat bases on Crete and in the southern Peleponnese (1/Skl 1412/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)/

Black Sea:

In the evening of 18 May two vessels south of the Kerch Strait gave the wrong answer to a recognition signal call. PT boats were sent out to reconnoiter but did not locate anything.

The 1st PT Boat Flotilla was operating off Tuapse and Sotchi during the night of 18 May. The boats made contact with the enemy but no detailed reports have been received. One Anapa transport was unsuccessfully attacked by a submarine at noon on 18 May. The same transport was attacked by bombers and fighters later on, only slight damage resulting. In the course of the air attack on an Anapa transport reported on 18 May, not one, but two ferry barges sank. Two enemy planes were certainly, one probably shot down.

Five new inertia contact mines were swept by a group of motor minesweepers of foreign origin northeast of Cape Chersonese. Minesweeping operations in the Kerch Strait and Sea of Asov were without success.

The ferry service ran to schedule.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Churchill delivered a speech to Congress analyzing the problem of whether priority was to be accorded to warfare against Germany or Japan. He said:

"A conquest of Japan would not mean the conquest of Germany, whereas crushing Germany would have for its immediate consequence the defeat of Japan."

Churchill defined the danger from submarines as still being the most acute danger. With regard to the air offensive against Germany, opinion is divided as to whether it can bring about the collapse of Germany; it would be worth while, however, to make the experiment. The reduction of the productivity of the war industry in Germany, Italy, and the occupied countries was declared a definite objective. The support to Russia, which is still carrying the main burden of the war, is said to be particularly important. A serious danger lay in undue prolongation of the war.

Certain clauses of the agreement which General Wilson is said to have concluded with Turkey in Ankara have become known through Swiss legation circles in Bucharest. According to this agreement Turkey is to supply skilled workers for an armament industry in the Near East, is to remain neutral and place naval bases at the disposal of Great Britain in case of an attack on Greece.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief of Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that special mines weighing four tons each were dropped during the attack on the valley dams. Presumably the closing down of pits will result in a reduction of 20,000 tons, representing a quarter of the monthly supply, in the fuel oil supplies to the Navy from home production.

II. The Chief of Naval Intelligence Division reports the Allied denial that explosive utensils such as lead pencils etc. have been dropped.

In reply to an inquiry it was stated in the House of Commons that there are no agreements whatsoever existing not to bomb Rome. Such action would be taken whenever it appeared necessary.

III. The Chief of the Anti-Aircraft Section, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch continues his report on the naval anti-aircraft artillery which he began on 28 April.

The standard gun is the 10.5 cm anti-aircraft gun, of which 285 batteries are available. A new construction is the 10.5 cm twin-barrel gun. The introduction

of the newly constructed 12.8 cm anti-aircraft gun is to be expected shortly. This gun demands treble the amount of work put into that of the 10.5 cm gun, but shows, instead, a considerably higher ballistic performance.

As regards control gear, the existing "Dreiwag" and "Kleinkog" are now supplemented by the control gear "40". An additional one, the anti-aircraft computer "41", is in the stage of development.

Equipment with radar is in process, ten sets of gear are being delivered monthly.

The standard searchlight is in the one with a 150 cm diameter; a type with a 200 cm diameter is being introduced. The available searchlight sighting gear is good, especially the thermal sighting gear which locates the exhaust gases of planes.

The demand for allocation of ammunition amounts to 2,000 rounds per barrel. 10.5 cm ammunition is scarce. Consumption will have to be carefully watched so as to meet any bottlenecks which may occur in good time.

Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

IV. Group West proposes to sail a dummy convoy from Brest in the coming new moon period, and to intercept the attacking boats launched against it by the enemy with torpedo boats. Because of the width of the Channel here, there is no need to fear location. Chief, Naval Staff is in agreement with the plan. (1/Skl 1483/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II b.)

V. The Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports on the distribution of forces in the south east area: There are 27 divisions of Italian and nine divisions of German troops available. The fighting value of the Italian divisions, except those in Greece, is to be regarded as negligible.

Quiet prevails in Serbia at present. In Croatia, the situation is unsettled, although a mopping-up operation has taken place. A mopping-up operation has commenced in Montenegro. The situation in Albania is not known. The Italian troops are nowhere in a position to hamstring the strong guerrilla activity. The mopping-up operations are therefore being carried out by German troops.

The area of southern and western Greece is directly menaced. For this reason, German troops are also being inserted in areas occupied by Italians. These troops are, for the present, still under Italian command. For the time being, it is also necessary for naval bases or defensive installations to be placed under Italian command. Our Air Force in the entire area is still very weak at present.

According to the assessment of Group South, western Greece is the most highly menaced spot, if the Fortress Crete is by-passed. A landing in the north in the Gulf of Patras yields the greatest chances of success to the enemy, as southern Greece would then be cut off immediately. Because of this risk, the Group suggests not to transfer large supply dumps too far forward and not to store too much there. Likewise, the command posts should have alternative possibilities from the advanced positions. The Group includes the Peloponnese and Athens among these advanced spots and suggests that a second command post for the Commanding Admiral, Aegean Sea should be established in Salonica. On the basis of this review the Group has undertaken various countermeasures, as for instance the laying of minefields on the west coast, and the mounting of shore batteries. Discussions have taken place with the X Air Corps concerning reconnaissance over the North-African coast. (1/Skl 1459/43, and 1427/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

Naval Staff concurs with the opinion of Group South. Our own potential strength is, at present, still very low. An improvement cannot be expected for months. The area can be held by limited forces (two or three divisions) against an attacking foe, provided the Italians do not fail. It is important for the attack to be intercepted and brought to a halt on the coast. A penetration of the Italian occupied territory with German troops as well as material assistance and exertion of influence on the defensive preparations are, therefore, necessary. Nevertheless, measures will also have to be taken, as suggested by Group South, which take into consideration an evacuation of the Peloponnese and central Greece.

The Chief, Naval Staff has decided that, for the present, the transfer of the Commanding Admiral, Aegean to Salonica is out of the question, and that the Armed Forces High Command is to be informed of the opinion held by Naval Staff on the situation in the Balkans and further enemy plans in this area.

VI. Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff enumerates the enemy forces in North Africa. The available eight to ten infantry and three to four armored divisions will be sufficient for two simultaneous operations. By the autumn the forces are to be increased to 22 British and five French infantry divisions and five to seven armored divisions. A landing in southern France is possible but the forces for pushing forward and building up such an operation are lacking.

Adequate air reconnaissance is being carried out for the observation of enemy plans. The net of agents in North Africa is working satisfactorily. The Straits of Sicily are being watched as far as possible. One can assume that all enemy movements there will be detected.

VII. It is the intention of the Armed Forces High Command to arrange a special designation for those vessels carrying prisoners of war on board through the Red Cross. Naval Staff concurs with this plan.

Special Items.

I. Commander in Chief, Navy has issued an order concerning the tasks of the naval area commanders with regard to the operational readiness of the naval bases.

Apart from the defense of the bases, the precautionary protection of the supply and repair installations has been ordered and the responsibility of the commanders emphasized for the efficient control of supplies in the event of disturbances and losses. (1/Skl 11657/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.)

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch submitted the minutes of a meeting held by the working committee "Battle for Coast Lines". Naval Staff, Operations Division gives his views on it in 1/Skl I op. 14566/43 geh. (in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.).

It is a matter of preparatory countermeasures, and delineation of the responsible defensive and operational areas of the Armed Services.

III. Group South requested that the Italian PT boats in the Black Sea should be combined into one independent flotilla. The Commander, PT Boats had supported this request. Naval Staff, Operations Division expresses its approval in 1/Skl III a 14558/43 Gkdos.

IV. The Chief, Radio Intercept Reports, Naval Staff, Naval Communications Division submits in the Special Intercept Report No. 20/43 the results of radio monitoring and decoding.

Situation 20 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance showed: 4 small steamers off Dover, 3 steamers off Margate, 8 steamers off Dungeness, and 8 steamers and 2 patrol boats about 240 miles northwest of the Hebrides.

The air activity over the outer Bay of Biscay was very brisk, 46 planes having been detected.

2. Own Situation:

Area Atlantic Coast:

One mine was swept off La Pallice.

The large lock in Bordeaux has been blocked by the dock gate, the small one should be serviceable by 21 May.

Channel Area:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Two mines were swept off Ameland. The minesweeping and patrol duties in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out to schedule.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

The meteorological reconnaissance northeast of Jan Mayen and west of the Faeroes, as well as the reconnaissance north of Iceland did not yield any tactical results.

According to radio intelligence, 25 planes were operating over the North Sea and six over the Iceland region.

The battery Petsamo was shelled from the Ribachi peninsula on 18 May. A number of planes flew over Aalesund and Egersund on 20 May.

Own Situation:

The steamer SANEW, grounded in the Oslo fjord following an explosion, has stopped her leak and is once more afloat. This was probably the result of sabotage with adhesive mines.

There were 27 vessels escorted north and 28 south.

Special Items.

Naval Staff requests the Naval Command, Norway to submit an assessment as to whether it will be possible to reduce the danger to convoys arising from enemy

submarines and planes by shifting the convoy routes in the arctic region to a greater distance from the coast. (See Telegram 1704.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

In the course of the day 34 enemy planes were detected over the area of the island of Tyters. There was very brisk guardship traffic in Kronstadt Bay and off Lavansaari. Several convoys en route in an easterly direction. One submarine left Lavansaari last night on southwesterly course. Four Russian PT boats were cruising east of Lavansaari during the night.

Mines are suspected to have been dropped west of Nargoen.

2. Own Situation:

Within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic the minelayer BRUMMER, 3 freighters, 4 tankers, and 1 submarine were escorted, and 14 vessels were on operations sweeping the channels.

Two mines were swept by magnetic minesweeping planes off Copenhagen.

Two troop transports and an escort vessel left Swinemuende for Oslo.

Towards noon two enemy reconnaissance planes flew over Kiel, Rostock, Stralsund, Swinemuende, and Stettin.

The report on the raid on Flensburg is supplemented to the effect that the Flensburg Ship Construction Company suffered considerable damage and will not be in working order for some time. One submarine has been damaged considerably, two others to a lesser extent. A 2,000 t floating dock was damaged by a direct hit. Considerable damage was inflicted on the buildings of the Flensburg Engine Construction Plant.

A small floating dock capsized.

The number of planes shot down by naval anti-aircraft artillery during the raid on Kiel is corrected to seven.

During the night there was an air attack on Reval (Tallinn). The report on the damage inflicted has not yet been received.

Two enemy planes were shot down in the course of air attacks on the submarine positions behind the "Seeigel" barrages.

Special Items.

Naval Station Baltic reports in reply to a request from Group North, Fleet that the minelayer ROLAND is available immediately until about the end of August. (See Telegram 2217.)

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

The following convoy movements took place, according to data emanating largely from Japanese sources:

On 13 Apr. a large convoy of transports consisting of 15 ships, from Philadelphia to North Africa.

On 16 Apr. a convoy of 13 ships from Philadelphia presumably to Australia, eight vessels of which were fully laden with Canadian troops and five vessels carrying heavy armored cars and other war materiel.

A large convoy of more than 100 vessels under very heavy escort is at present en route from the U.S.A. to North Africa. It is possible that this is the same convoy that passed the Straits of Gibraltar on 17 May consisting of a large number of vessels.

About 100 transports are said to be concentrated at present in the harbor of Philadelphia. A U.S. battleship, several cruisers and destroyers are said to have been lying in the harbor of Casablanca for the last few days.

2. Own Situation:

The operation of Group "Donau" against the SC convoy was broken off yesterday because of an increasingly deteriorating visibility and very strong naval and air escort. As the only success one boat reports the sinking of a vessel of 6,500 BRT and the possible torpedoing of one other. So far six boats have failed to answer the request to report. The operation against this convoy had been made very difficult by the unfavorable weather conditions, as a result of which the strong escort made itself felt to particular disadvantage.

Group "Mosel is today expecting an eastbound convoy. Poor visibility is prevalent in this sea area as well.

Special Items.

On 20 May the Chief, Naval Staff ordered seven more boats to be quickly converted into anti-aircraft submarines in addition to the three anti-aircraft

submarines already in commission. In connection with the construction of the turrets, the risk of a delay in the deadlines for new constructions may have to be taken into account. The change in the armament of the front line submarines to four-barreled anti-aircraft guns however, takes priority over the seven new anti-aircraft submarines. The designation "anti-aircraft decoy vessel" in use so far is no longer to be employed. (1/Skl 14754/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.)

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

In the western area 79 planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating and seven in the Mediterranean. One Beaufort was shot down by a Ju 88 over the Bay of Biscay.

There was no offensive activity on the part of our own forces in the course of the day and during the night of 20 May.

Enemy activity in the western area was brisk by day. Six Mosquitoes entered Germany penetrating as far as Brunswick, Potsdam, and Munich. During the night eleven planes flew over Reich territory. Harassing raids and attacks on trains were carried out.

2. Mediterranean Area:

There were 226 planes of the 2nd Air Force operating, the bulk being on reconnaissance and escort.

3. Eastern Front:

Three enemy planes were shot down in the Black Sea area. Reconnaissance over the Volga River continues to report very heavy traffic. The Volga River was fouled with mines during the night of 19 May.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The stern of the destroyer G "93" was being towed into port at noon on 19 May. The cruiser that had left on 19 May put into Gibraltar again in the evening.

No further reports have come to hand since 18 May concerning the two large convoys in the western Mediterranean. Air reconnaissance reports: five

PT boats in three groups off Tabarca, six destroyers in two groups off Kelibia. The photographic interpretation of Alexandria revealed the following: In addition to the French vessels, 1 vessel presumably a cruiser, 2 destroyers in the floating dock, 1 submarine, 8 escort vessels, 9 smaller naval vessels, the destroyer escort vessel WOOLWICH, 1 auxiliary vessel, 1 repair ship, 3 hospital ships, 2 transports, 58 freighters, and 4 tankers. One freighter ablaze in front of the harbor.

One coastal sailing vessel of 400 BRT was damaged off Haifa in the course of an attack.

Submarines were reported off Cape San Vito on 19 May, off Cape Bonifacio and south of Toulon on 20 May.

German air reconnaissance found a number of moored mines off Cape Pecora and off Punta Stilo.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

In the evening of 19 May the German hospital ship KONSTANZ, ten miles northwest of Pantelleria, was forced to put into Tunis by three enemy destroyers.

Three PT boats have been en route from Toulon to Augusta since 20 May. Two submarine chasers are en route from Genoa to La Spezia. Two motor mine-sweepers are en route from Chalon to Marseilles, two others being transferred via Rhine - Rhone.

Three Aegean boats put into Taranto. An Italian tug en route from Messina to Palermo was sunk by a submarine on 19 May, according to a report from the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South. No details are yet available.

The airfield of Grosseto was seriously damaged by an air attack and is now out of commission. On this occasion five planes were destroyed. In the course of an attack on the airfield of Sassari (Sardinia) four planes were destroyed. The airfield at Villa Cidro was likewise attacked. One plane was lost, four enemy planes were shot down. The airfield was again attacked towards evening. Damage has not yet been reported. An attack on Pantelleria did not cause any damage. Four of the attacking planes were shot down. Messina was attacked several times during the evening. Damage to buildings was inflicted.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The war transport KT "22" is on her return passage from Cagliari to Reggio. On 19 May two steamers put into Leghorn from Olbia. One submarine chaser is on escort duty between Messina and Syracuse. The steamer TANA (5,500 BRT) escorted by a torpedo boat has left Spezia for Leghorn on 20 May, and will proceed from there to Maddalena together with the steamer TELL (1,300 BRT).

The PIERRE CLAUDE left Naples for Palermo on 19 May. All other convoy traffic to Sicily ran to schedule.

Special Items.

I. The German Naval Command, Italy reports that in spite of the heavy losses in steamers there has been no relaxation for other supply services at present. The transfer of steamers for use in the Aegean area has the same priority as the supplies for the Italian islands. (See Telegram 1125.)

II. Group West reports that the degaussing test of the minelayer BRANDENBURG has not been satisfactory and requests a decision as to whether the degaussing is to be carried out.

III. In response to a request Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Shipping and Transport Branch has submitted a survey of the German Shipping available in the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea. According to this survey the following ships are available: 32 ships in the Mediterranean totalling 95,000 BRT, 21 in the Adriatic Sea totalling 51,000 BRT, 34 in the Aegean Sea totalling 76,000 BRT, and 26 in the Black Sea totalling 44,000 BRT. Tankers are not included in these figures. (1/Skl 14710/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Prior to the laying of minefields off the coast of southern France Group West requested that an extensive declared area should be announced. Naval Staff informs the Group that an announcement of an Italian operational and declared area in the sea area in question is in preparation and that an announcement of a purely German declared area in the Mediterranean is not proposed.

Naval Staff has no objection to the laying of the barrage beginning prior to the publication of the announcement, if the safety of Spanish shipping along the coastal route is guaranteed. (1/Skl I E 14477/43 Gkdos. and War Diary, Part A, 19 May.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The minelayers DRACHE and BULGARIA carried out their special operation as planned. On 18 May an Italian auxiliary sailing vessel was attacked by planes. The crew abandoned the boat, which is still adrift at sea. As the vessel, which had put out of Crete carrying a cargo of oil in drums, had not been passed by the authorities concerned, oil smuggling is suspected. An investigation is pending. The steamer FRONSAC (418 BRT) which ran aground off Lemnos is a total loss. All valuable engine parts are being dismantled.

Special Items.

In 1/Skl 1492/43 Gkdos. Chefs. (In War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV) the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff was handed the assessment of the situation as regards the possibility of enemy landings in the southeastern area, as compiled by Naval Staff. (Also refer to the Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.)

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to the radio intelligence one destroyer was at sea off the central coast of the Caucasus.

Air reconnaissance reports the following vessels: 1 merchantman and 5 guard boats off Sotchi, 8 coastal vessels, 2 guard boats in Gelenjik, 1 torpedo boat, 2 motor minesweepers, 6 PT boats, 1 escort vessel, 8 coastal vessels, and 1 floating dock in Tuapse.

Own Situation:

The two PT boats stationed off Tuapse attacked what was believed to be a minesweeper without result. Otherwise no traffic was enccuntered. On their return passage the boats were continuously attacked from the air. One plane was apparently shot down. Our own boats suffered only slight damage. The two boats operating off Sotchi sank one lighter of 600 BRT and one coastal vessel. The attack on the Sotchi roadstead was repulsed by well placed salvoes from the coastal batteries. These two boats as well were persistantly attacked by planes on their return passage. Two planes were shot down, one boat was damaged (two engines were put out of commission).

Escort forces engaged an enemy submarine off Cape Chauda during the night of 19 May. Results have not been reported. The same convoy was attacked off the Kerch Strait in the morning. The coastal defense in Temriuk Bay did not sight anything during the night of 19 May. Enemy planes attacking an Anapa transport in the morning of 20 May were forced off by our own fighters.

Eleven mines were cut from the submarine barrage off Sevastopol and a channel 1,000 meters wide was opened to traffic.

The submarine U "9" put out of Constanta on enemy patrol on 20 May.

The small Bulgarian torpedo boat SMELY capsized in the heavy seas between Burgas and Varna. The ferry service ran to schedule.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The Japanese have expressed the wish to purchase the short wave transmitters transferred there some time ago. The Chief, Naval Communications Division, Naval Staff has advised the Naval Attaché, Tokyo that the sale is not desirable as the transmitters will probably be needed for installation on a guard ship in the proposed submarine base and informs the Attaché that the objection of the Japanese to the installation of the transmitters for German use is liable to be detrimental to existing relations, as its purpose is obviously to secure the purchase of the transmitters. (1/Skl 14521/43 Gkdos.)

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Items of Political Importance.

The Chief of the U.S. Supply Services in Great Britain stated that the Army has completed on British soil all preparations which will make it possible to handle even the largest amount of supplies incidental to an invasion of the European continent.

In his speech to the Conservative Party the British Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that Germany would be bombed by day and by night over her entire length and breadth.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff.

I. Lieutenant Commander Buerkle of the Net Barrage Unit was dispatched to the valley dams to test the anti-torpedo nets it was proposed to lay across the reservoirs. He reports as follows on the results of his journey: It was not torpedoes which had been used, but without a doubt special mine bombs. For this reason and because the reservoir bottom gradually rises to the crest of the dam the laying of anti-torpedo nets is superfluous. The only effective protection for the valley dams consists in the use of numerous balloons and anti-aircraft artillery. The idea of tentering horizontal valley nets against the mine bombs must be discarded, because it would not be possible to tenter nets that would bear the impact of such heavy bombs.

Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division has been requested to effect the withdrawal of the order for the laying of anti-torpedo nets through the mediation of Rear Admiral Voss at Fuehrer Headquarters. It is to be added that the Air Force does not attach any importance to the laying of such nets, and that important naval barrage plans would have to be discarded because of the shortage of material.

Chief of Staff, Naval Staff suggests submitting a proposal to the Armed Forces High Command and the Air Force, Operations Staff for similar operations against Russian reservoirs or the Nile dams.

II. Chief of Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that voices in the U.S.A. grow ever more insistant, urging the intensification of the war against Japan.

Churchill's speech was evidently a reply to these voices.

Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

III. Chief of Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that the

documents captured in Spain were in the brief case belonging to the dead courier, Major Martin, who was mentioned in one of the letters. The British consul was present when the documents were discovered. The Spaniards confiscated the papers on a pretext and returned them later on (also refer to War Diary, Part A, 19 May.)

IV. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports two new suggestions from the Naval (Ship) Construction Division. On the basis of the recently revised requirements of Naval Staff the Naval (Ship) Construction Division has developed a new destroyer and a torpedo boat with certain changes in the drafts as made hitherto.

Special Items.

I. Chief, Naval Staff left for a tour of inspection of the west area.

II. Very undesirable delays have occurred in the construction of war transports for the Black Sea area. Naval Staff, Operations Division therefore requests information from Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division as to what has been the cause of these delays, and asks that all available means be employed to effect the completion of the first construction program of the war transports. (1/Skl III a 13963/43 Gkdos.)

III. In March the Naval Staff ordered an investigation of the possibility of installing a landing platform for gyroplanes and helicopters on the minelayer ELSASS pointing out that the installations were to be carried out in the current dockyard period. The decision on the installation was, however, not made by the Naval (Ship) Construction Division until after the vessel had completed its dockyard period. The ship is at present at the disposal of Group North, ready for operations. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch and Naval (Ship) Construction Division have been instructed that all preparations are to be got in hand at once, so as to be able to begin with the installation of the equipment immediately on the return of the vessel from her operational assignment. (1/Skl I L 14634/43 Gkdos.)

IV. The Admiral of the Italian Navy attached to Naval Staff, Admiral Bertoldi, presented a telegram from Admiral Riccardi in which the latter expressed his thanks for the Commander in Chief, Navy's visit to Rome and for the order for the taking over of the Chief Command of the German Naval Command, Italy by Admiral Ruge.

Situation 21 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo reported that ship "28" started on her passage

to Batavia on 21 May after coaling.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

The evaluation of repeated photographic reconnaissance over the Portsmouth - Pool area did not reveal any essential changes in number and position of the boats suitable for landing purposes. On the whole a slight decrease in the number of small vessels was noticeable. A landing transport ship which had been reported in Portsmouth at the end of April was no longer found to be there.

Air reconnaissance sighted nine merchantmen off Start Point.

Air activity over the Bay of Biscay was brisk with 41 planes operating.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

One mine was swept off Brest. The harbor entrance to Brest has been opened to shipping again. La Pallice and St. Jean de Luz were closed because of mines having been laid.

There are at present 21 heavy and eleven light anti-aircraft batteries available in Bordeaux, in addition to two balloon barrages.

Channel Area:

A convoy en route from Guernsey to Cherbourg was attacked from the air on the night of 21 May. A tug was hit by an unexploded bomb. The steamer ARNOLD MAERSK (1,966 BRT) carrying a cargo of bombs and coal ran aground in St. Aubien Bay (Jersey) while en route from Granville to Guernsey and will have to be regarded as lost.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Four mines were swept off the Frisian islands.

A convoy of five steamers en route from the Elbe to the Hock is being escorted by 6 patrol boats, 4 minesweepers, 2 mine exploding vessels, and 2 anti-aircraft vessels. Fourteen motor minesweepers are preceding ahead of the convoy to clear mines.

All other escort duties were carried out to schedule.

Wilhelmshaven was raided by a formation of 70 planes towards noon. Clear sky, good visibility; about 500 explosive bombs were dropped; considerable damage to buildings. Shops were demolished in the dockyard, two tugs sank, slight damage was inflicted on three submarines. Damage to the docks will stop work on new constructions and repairs to ships for about a week. The Kaiser Wilhelm Swing Bridge cannot be turned at present because of broken cables. A military barracks, the Naval Clothing Stores, and the officers' mess were hit; numerous water pipes burst.

The second formation attacked Emden. The largest portion of the bombs fell on Dollart and Ems; damage to buildings was of medium extent.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Our air reconnaissance sighted one destroyer and three patrol boats off the north coast of Iceland on easterly course.

Radio intelligence picked up radio traffic between the Commander of the destroyer flotilla aboard the BAKU and two PT boats and six guard ships.

Three Russian submarines were intercepted off the Arctic coast.

Seven planes were operating over the North Sea, and nine planes of the Iceland squadrons.

Own Situation:

One fjord near Arnoey was temporarily closed because of suspected submarines. Mine alert is reported from the Tana Fjord.

There were 16 ships escorted north and 19 south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Apparently submerged submarines were detected off Vaindlo and north

of Kolga Bay. Boats of a landing flotilla shelled a submarine off Keri (west of Revalstein light ship); the submarine dived fast and one member of the crew left behind was picked up.

2. Own Situation:

Ten steamers, four tankers, one submarine, and the minelayer BRUMMER were escorted within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. There were 21 vessels assigned to sweep the channels. One ground mine was swept in the Kattegat, which detonated below the mine exploding vessel without inflicting any damage. The channel had been swept more than a hundred times at the beginning of May. Two EIM/A's were salvaged on Laaland. An anti-submarine school boat reported a good submarine location north of Rixhoeft. One minesweeper and one destroyer were dispatched on an anti-submarine hunt, there have been no results so far. The ferry service to Trelleborg has been canceled because of suspected submarines.

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

The Intelligence Center Spain reports with reservation that a convoy of twelve freighters and four tankers put into Casablanca on 11 May. No discharging took place in the harbor, but only black and white U.S. troops were embarked, and the convoy put out again for Algiers on the same day. The convoy escort is said to have consisted of two aircraft carriers, ten destroyers, and six submarines.

Another agent reports that a large convoy was ready for departure in New York on 14 May.

2. Own Situation:

It is to be seen from special radio intercept reports that the convoy HX "239" did not proceed on a course of 14° as previously intercepted, but altered course so as to by-pass south of the group. According to that, the enemy steered on the basis of a previously estimated submarine situation. On the basis of the new course intercepted Group "Mosel" has been shifted to the southeast. The passing of the convoy may be expected in the course of the daylight hours today.

Only one of the six boats of Group "Donau" which have not reported since the convoy operation, in spite of the request to do so, reported during the night,

adding that its transmitter had broken down. If the remaining five boats have been lost, it must be assumed that not all were lost in engagements with the convoy, as there have been no reports received since the beginning of the operation. Air attack reports show that two boats might have fallen victim to these attacks prior to the operation.

One boat operating off Capetown has not observed any traffic in the course of the past three days.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

There were 140 planes of the 3rd Air Force operating over the western area, six over the Mediterranean. Enemy activity over the western area by day was moderate. With regard to the raid on Wilhelmshaven it has been reported that eleven enemy planes were shot down by fighters, two by naval anti-aircraft, and one by anti-aircraft artillery. The smoke screening in Emden and Wilhelmshave functioned well.

The following fighter-bombers were on harassing raids on the night of 21 May: Three over London, one over Ashford, three over Dover, and one over Folkestone.

During the night there were only a few harassing raids within the Reich, and attacks on railways.

2. Mediterranean Area:

There were 265 planes of the 2nd Air Force operating.

Airfields on Malta were attacked by fighter-bombers. In the course of an attack on Jijelli during the night of 20 May two steamers were damaged. The bulk of the bombs fell on and between the landing craft. Italian bombers were dispatched to bomb the port of Sfax.

There are no special reports from the eastern front and the Black Sea.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

Three destroyers, one French survey ship and one freighter left Gibraltar on the forenoon of 21 May.

Air reconnaissance reports brisk shipping in the sea area Tunis - Bizerta, including numerous destroyers. Four merchantmen, five destroyers, and six escort vessels on southerly course were sighted south of Kelibia. Vessels that could not be identified were off La Valetta in the morning. The photographic reconnaissance of Cyprus did not show any landing craft there. The photographic reconnaissance of Port Said revealed 2 auxiliary vessels, 20 boats, 1 transport, 26 freighters, and 2 tankers, and north of Port Said 5 freighters.

Submarines were reported as follows:

off Capri and the northwestern tip of Corsica on 20 May, off Taranto on 21 May.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four Italian submarines were in the operational area.

Three of our own submarines have orders to sail for the Mediterranean in the next new moon period.

The submarine U "303" was hit by a torpedo from an enemy submarine about six miles southeast of Cape Cepet on the afternoon of 21 May; some of the crew were lost.

Ten auxiliary motor minesweepers arrived in St. Tropez from Toulon. Two submarine chasers en route to Leghorn put into Genoa. The three Aegean boats have left Otranto for Corfu on 21 May.

In the afternoon the Villa Cidro airfield was attacked; two enemy planes were shot down, one of our own planes went up in flames. At noon four-engined enemy planes attacked the Scicca and Castal Vetrano airfields. Damage was inflicted to billets and non-operational planes. Nine enemy planes were shot down by fighters.

Severe damage was caused in the town during a raid on Reggio. At the same time San Giovanni was raided; the railway station received hits.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

Escort duties to the islands were carried out without incident. Eleven steamers were operating there, and six naval landing craft in the coastal traffic.

The steamer SANTA FE which ran aground off Zara got afloat and put into Pola.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The harbor of Melos was bombed, no damage resulting.

The minelayers DRACHE, BULGARIA, and three German submarine chasers put into Piraeus on 20 May after carrying out a minelaying operation.

The escort duties were carried out to schedule.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

A large vessel, presumably a destroyer, was made out on the coast between Alushta and Sudak on the evening of 20 May. The destroyer was about 60 miles south of Feodosia during the night, according to radio location. The flotilla leader CHARKOW was located 40 miles south of Anapa towards 0300, and a destroyer off Tuapse at 0900.

Own Situation:

The only two operational PT boats were launched against the destroyers but had to give up the pursuit of the retreating destroyers because of the extraordinarily bright moonlit night.

Three naval landing craft were attacked without success by submarines south of the Taman peninsula on 21 May.

The ferry service in the Kerch Strait ran to schedule.

The naval artillery lighter MAL "2" is in Temriuk, the MAL's "1" and "3" are under repair in Kerch, the MAL's "4", "8", and "9" are lying in Constanta awaiting assembly, two more MAL's arrived there on 19 May.

Our own harbor defense boom off Genitchesk has been cleared.

Special Items.

I. The Commanding Admiral, Group South calls attention to the vital importance of the supply traffic for the Army and Air Force in the Black Sea, and reports that the requirements cannot be met unless the loading and discharging ports are protected against enemy air attack. The ports of Constanta, Sevastopol, Kerch, Anapa, Feodosia, and Ivanbaba are cited as the most important. Among these, only the Kerch Strait is defended. Group South once more requests the allocation of suitable anti-aircraft artillery defense for these ports. (1/Skl 14854/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part Vol. XIV.)

II. Group South reports that, given the most favorable circumstances, eight of the twelve available PT boats are operational, and that the boats are subject to considerable wear and tear since they are continuously on operations. For this reason the Group requests four more PT boats for the Black Sea. (1/Skl 14861/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

Naval Staff refuses to grant this request, as the available number of boats and the demands from other theaters of war do not permit any allocation to the Black Sea. (1/Skl I op. 14849/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

III. Group South is informed by Naval Staff to the effect that the TMB/C's are unsuitable for the proposed operation.

(1/Skl I E 14786/43 Gkdos.)

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Admiral Yamamoto, the Commander in Chief of the Japanese Fleet was killed at a front line airfield in April. His successor is Admiral Koga, hitherto Commanding Admiral of the Naval Station Yokosuka.

The Commander in Chief, Navy has arranged that the crew of the submarine about to arrive from Japan (keyword "Flieder") are to be received as guests of the Navy and that the cost of repairs and supplies are to be borne by the German Navy.

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Items of Political Importance.

The Military Attaché at Rome has sent a brief assessment of the situation and morale of the people in Italy. He describes the general trend as unsettled and filled with growing despondency. The heavy air attacks and the clever peace propaganda of the enemy make a strong impression. (1/Skl 14829/43 Gkdos.)

The Chief Command of the Army Group Africa submitted a report, which is now out of date however, on the political penetration and economic inclusion of Tunisia in the war organization of the Axis forces. With great cleverness the French themselves were won over to collaboration and the ambition of the Arabs for equality was exploited. Credit is due to Minister Dr. Rahn for his special share in these successes. (3/Skl 1760/43 Gkdos.)

Conference on the Situation with the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff.

I. No details are yet to hand concerning the loss of the submarine off Toulon, so that final judgment is not possible. Chief of Staff, Naval Staff states that the presence of the enemy submarine had been known for two weeks and that investigations will yet have to be made as to whether adequate countermeasures against this threat were taken.

II. The Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff reports that Group West had proposed to use the two minelayers about to be completed in Toulon for assignments on the south coast of France. The assignments for these vessels within the region of the German Naval Command, Italy have already been fixed. (See War Diary, Part A, 19 May.) It is not possible to place them at the disposal of the Group. The request of Group West was turned down in 1/Skl I E 14806/43 Gkdos. The Group was informed in the same teletype that the instructions requested concerning the routing of Red Cross ships in the Gulf of Lyons will be given later.

III. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that the Communist International central office has been dissolved, which can be taken as a concession to the Allies from Moscow. Rumor has it that Litvinov, who is in Russia at present, will not return to Washington.

The Portuguese Foreign Minister stated to the German minister that no pressure is being exerted on Portugal by the Allies with regard to an occupation of the Portuguese islands.

It is learned from a confidential Spanish source that the Allies have addressed a peace offer to Italy, in which the return of Lybia is promised.

IV. The Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff states that the French Admiral in Alexandria has reported his position to be untenable and that he intends to join the fighting French in North Africa. Laval in a telegraphic reply ordered the scuttling of the ships.

Special Items.

I. The Mining and Barrage Branch reports that considerable shortages in mines and minesweeping material have arisen from the reduction of the iron allocations, and requests that no further reductions be made in the iron allocations, as proposed. (1/Skl 14927/43 geh.)

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch has established new service regulations for the Commanding Admiral, Northern Waters. (1/Skl 15111/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part B, Vol. V.)

Situation 22 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Twenty-nine planes were operating over the Bay of Biscay.

2. Own Situation:

Area Atlantic Coast.

Six mines were swept off the Atlantic coast.

Channel Area:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Twelve mines were swept off the Frisian islands.

The auxiliary sailing vessel ERNA struck a mine north of Roter Sand and sank.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff issued orders to continue the convoy traffic to the Netherlands in spite of all difficulties. (See War Diary, Part A, 17 and 19 May.) Station North, in a survey of the situation, reports anew the difficulties and the dangers to which convoys are exposed along the routes to the Netherlands, explaining the plan reported by the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North for the safeguarding of this traffic. (See Telegram 1825.)

Following this survey of the situation, Station North again requests that the escort motor minesweepers assigned to the Naval Chief Command, Norway, should be assigned to the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North instead as a reinforcement of the convoy escort by our own units is no longer possible as a result of numerous losses (see Telegram 1825).

II. The Commanding Admiral, Denmark reports that German planes fired on Danish fishing smacks within Danish fishing waters on 19 May because of an error in dead reckoning. The Commanding Admiral, Denmark expressed his regret to the Danish Navy at this incident and promised compensation for damages.

III. Naval Staff has informed the Commander in Chief, Air, Operations Staff that it is hoped the attacks made by our planes on Danish fishing smacks in forbidden naval areas will have a salutary effect, and requests the Commander in Chief, Air, Operations Staff, to cancel attacks on Danish vessels until further notice. (1/Skl 14939/43 Gkdos.)

2. Norway, Northern Waters.

Enemy Situation:

The reconnaissance over the sea area northeast of Iceland and off Jan Mayen was without result. A merchantman was sighted about 150 miles east of the Faeroes.

Air reconnaissance detected one merchantman, three PT boats, and four to five patrol vessels off the northeastern tip of the Ribachi peninsula. Two Russian destroyers and three British naval vessels are said to be sailing from Molotovsk to Kola Bay, according to radio intelligence. Three submarines were operating off the Arctic Coast. Two planes were detected operating over the North Sea and one plane of the Iceland squadrons.

Own Situation:

The Russian batteries on the Ribachi peninsula fired on a westbound convoy in spite of the smoke screen and scored a hit on the after-deck of the steamer VALENCIA. The fire was returned by our own batteries.

The emergency minefield against surprise attacks at Askevold has been completed.

Twenty-five vessels were escorted north and 25 south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Brisk guard-ship traffic off Lavansaari.

2. Own Situation:

Nine steamers were escorted and 24 vessels detailed to sweep channels within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. One ground mine was swept off Copenhagen.

The suspected presence of submarines off the Pomeranian coast was not confirmed. The submarine alert was canceled towards noon and the ferry service to Trelleborg resumed. Towards evening one of our own submarines reported two torpedo tracks about 40 miles north of Rixhoeft. An anti-submarine hunt is in progress.

Increased submarine patrol was detailed to operate behind the barrages.

An enemy submarine was attacked by a naval landing craft, at first with depth charges and then with gunfire. After several hits the boat settled down by the stern. It is assumed that the boat suffered at least severe damage. Finnish planes and landing craft dropped depth charges on a fresh oil patch off Vaindlo.

Our planes attacked the airfield on Lavansari and guard-ships off Schepel.

Two enemy planes were shot down during an enemy raid on Tytersari.

Finnish shipping has been given instructions to proceed within Swedish territorial waters.

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Group "Mosel" did not intercept the HX convoy. Presumably it passed the patrol line unseen in the poor visibility, as the boats briefly observed several carrier-based planes, one destroyer, and a smoke plume. A search on the basis of the destroyer sighting brought no result.

One boat in the southern sector of this group intercepted a southwestbound convoy. An operation against it did not promise success, as the boats lay about 100 to 200 miles astern of it and as an advance did not appear possible because of the enemy planes.

The first anti-aircraft submarine (U "441") put out from western France on 22 May.

One boat sank a steamer of 4,763 BRT west of the Belgian Congo, another one sank a freighter of 6,000 BRT off Capetown.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

The following planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating: 132 planes including 95 fighters in the western area, 15 planes including ten on anti-submarine hunt, in the Mediterranean. Enemy air activity over the western area was of medium strength during the day. There were no planes over Reich territory during the night.

2. Mediterranean Area:

Torpedo planes operated against shipping off Oran and against a convoy off Kelibia. No report on results has yet been received.

3. Eastern Front:

The Volga River was once more fouled with mines during the night of 22 May. A vessel of 800 BRT was sunk on the Volga River.

4. Northern Waters:

The 5th Air Force reports the sinking of a freighter of 4,000 BRT in Kola Bay on 21 May.

Special Items.

Naval Staff, in a resume addressed to the Commander in Chief, Air, Operations Staff, announces the recent losses due enemy air attacks in the Norwegian area, and once more requests the reinforcement of the fighter escort in the region of the 5th Air Force (1/Skl 14614/43 Gkdos.).

The Naval Chief Command, Norway, Group North, the Air Force Commander, Center, and the 5th Air Force have been informed of this step taken by the Naval Staff.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

In the morning of 22 May a convoy of 38 vessels put out from Gibraltar westbound. At the same time the very severely damaged destroyer G "93" was being towed in the direction of the Atlantic, and the minelayer ADVENTURE put in.

One U.S. cruiser, 9 destroyers, 4 minelayers, 4 transports, 8 freighters, and 2 tankers passed Ceuta at noon on 22 May. Six minesweepers were reported operating north of Cape Bon. Our air reconnaissance sighted a convoy of 21 merchantmen and warships on southwesterly course east of Kelibia. Nine minesweepers or corvettes on southerly course off Pantelleria.

Submarines were reported off Cape Vaticano on 21 May, off La Maddalena on 22 May. According to reliable reports 13 LST's are supposed to have put out of U.S. ports bound for the Red Sea via the Cape during March and April. This is the first time that a transfer of such vessels via the Cape route has come to our knowledge.

The enemy landing operations, according to a Spanish source, will take place between 1 and 15 June, and at the following three places:

1. against Sardinia, Corsica, and the south coast of France;

2. from Casablanca against the French Atlantic coast;

3. in conjunction with paragraph 2. from Great Britain against the French Atlantic coast.

The report was passed on subject to the usual reservations.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

A submarine chaser was engaged in submarine pursuit off Cape Vaticano on 21 May. Two further submarine chasers are transferring to La Spezia for escort duties. Ten auxiliary motor minesweepers are en route from Cannes to Genoa.

An Italian minesweeper detected an enemy minefield off Marettimo.

An operation against submarines was carried out off La Maddalena on 15 May, according to a belated report. At the close of the pursuit a heavy oil patch was reported.

According to an Italian report the German hospital ship KONSTANZ was not escorted into Tunis but into Malta.

Twelve planes were shot down during raids on airfields in Sicily, which caused only slight damage.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The Italian steamer BOLOGNA (2,993 BRT) was sunk by a submarine off Cape Vaticano in the afternoon of 21 May.

Transport traffic to the islands is running to schedule. Four Italian destroyers have been assigned to the transfer of Italian troops from La Spezia to La Maddalena.

Special Items.

I. The Commander, Submarines, Italy urgently requested submarine pursuit and channel sweeping because of the submarine losses off Toulon. Group West confirms the execution of the plan. Arado "196's" are being dispatched on anti-submarine patrol. (See Telegrams 0940 and 1638.)

II. The Quartermaster General, Army General Staff reported to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff that the turn-round periods in the Adriatic are unbearably long, and requests that the necessary steps be taken to remedy this. The German Naval Command, Italy has been informed of this matter by Naval Staff and requested to give its views. (See Telegram 1702.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

The enemy air activity in the southeastern area was brisker than heretofore, a great number of attacks were made on coastal sailing vessels.

One plane flew over Bulgarian territory dropping leaflets.

Own Situation:

Nothing to report.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence one to two destroyers were off Tuapse in the afternoon of 22 May and 25 miles southwest of Novorossisk in the evening. The convoy traffic between Gelenjik and Tuapse was brisk, according to air reconnaissance.

Own Situation:

Five of our naval landing craft en route from Kerch to Feodosiya were attacked by planes and submarines. Damage was not reported.

The naval artillery lighter MAL "2" sailed for Temriuk to relieve the MAL "3". The steamer TISZA together with two motor minesweepers and ship "19" arrived at Sulina from Sevastopol on 22 May.

Russian reconnaissance planes were over Burgas on 21 May.

The ferry service ran to schedule.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

The Chief of the American Command for Anti-Submarine Warfare stated the Allies are past the worst period of shipping losses through submarines. Squadrons of the U.S. Air Force supported by the British Coastal Command have driven the majority of the enemy submarines onto the high seas. Submarine activity is now restricted to a narrow strip in the central Atlantic where they provide a good target for pursuit.

On 20 May Churchill and Roosevelt attended the meeting of the Pacific War Council, during which two further questions were discussed:

1. the very close relation between all battle fronts, and

2. the importance of shipping in the Allied planning.

Roosevelt stated before the press conference that the great majority of the U.S. forces were assigned to the Pacific theater of war. This applied particularly to the Army and Navy. About one half of the Air Force was there.

An official report from the British Admiralty announces that probably 30 to 40 Axis ships were sunk or damaged by mines in the course of the African campaign, and stresses this to be a success of British minelayers.

The U.S. Navy Department announces that 17 of the 22 American warships damaged at Pearl Harbor have been recommissioned.

The British Minister at Bern gave expression to his views on the military situation. If Italy does not capitulate in the course of further developments, there remains the further possibility of a direct attack against Italy or an offensive in the Balkans. The attack on Italy would have to be linked up with attempts at landing in France, which are indeed in the course of preparation. A landing operation in the Balkans is far more difficult, as drawing Turkey into the operations will meet with Russia's opposition. The final victory can, therefore, only be achieved in the Mediterranean and on the western front.

The German Liaison Officer attached to the Finnish Air Force confirms the attitude of the Finnish Government already reported on 4 May not to permit air attacks by German planes on Soviet Russia from the Finnish area.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. It is intended to transfer the 8th PT Boat Flotilla from Norway to Home Waters for engine overhauls. The Fuehrer attached particular importance

to the employment of these boats in Norway. Captain Junge therefore received instructions to mention the transfer of the boats when the situation report is made at Fuehrer Headquarters (see Telegram 1702).

II. The German Naval Command, Italy reports that the engine condition of the boats of the 6th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla is unsatisfactory and requests an early transfer of the remaining eight boats of the 12th Minesweeper Flotilla (see Telegram 2140).

The Chief, Naval Staff has ordered that the instructions issued giving preference to the transportation of naval landing craft via the land route in France is to be amended in favor of motor minesweepers.

III. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports an inquiry from the Italian Naval Attaché concerning a promise of oil on the part of the Commander in Chief, Navy which was supposed to have been discussed in Rome. The Chief, Naval Staff states that the oil question was not touched at all in the course of the recent discussions in Rome. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Supply and Fuel Branch will investigate the matter further.

The NUERNBERG cannot carry out her engine overhaul because of the damage caused in Wilhelmshaven. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division will report in the next few days, in which dockyard these repairs are to be carried out.

Special Items.

I. It is recorded that on 14 May Ambassador Ritter of the Foreign Office asked the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff for instructions on how to phrase official statements concerning the lack of submarine successes. The Foreign Minister required these instructions for an exchange of information with the Japanese Ambassador Oshima. As the principal reasons for the negligible success the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff gave the extraordinarily strong escort, particularly from the air, on all convoys and the inexperience of young commanders.

In the course of this discussion, the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff pointed out to Ambassador Ritter the importance of the Baltic Sea. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff explained to what extent the training of submarines, and thereby the submarine warfare itself, is affected by any disturbance in the Baltic Sea. A conflict with Sweden might paralyze the entire submarine war. The elimination of Leningrad is said to be imperative. These trains of thought were entirely new to Ambassador Ritter; such considerations had not yet occurred to the Foreign Office, but they would be carefully followed up after this.

II. In a personal letter the Air Commander, Atlantic advises the Chief, Naval Staff of a request addressed by him to the 3rd Air Force for an increase in the

bombers for operation against enemy shipping off the Bay of Biscay. (In War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.)

III. The Chief, Surface Vessel Constructional Planning Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division submits the minutes of a meeting on 17 May in which the Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval (Ship) Construction Division reported to the Commander in Chief, Navy on the state of construction on Walther and type VII C 42 submarines. The Chief, Naval Staff ordered that one Walther submarine was to be built with, and one without, a forward hydroplane. On the question of lacking engineering personnel, the Chief, Naval Staff orders the Naval (Ship) Construction Division to apply to General von Unruh. No decision has yet been made as to whether armor plating intended for naval landing craft is to be used for submarines. (See War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.)

IV. On 18 May the Chiefs of the Bureau of Naval Armament and the Naval Ordnance Division submitted a report to the Chief, Naval Staff on the effects of the steel allocations. With the present allocation the increased submarine program can be carried out, but all other plans suffer severe delays, particularly the Artillery Branch in the armament and ammunition production and the Underwater Obstacles Branch in the delivery of mining and barrage material.

Opinions differ on the advance delivery of iron promised by Minister Speer. The Chief, Naval Staff intends to have a private meeting with Speer. The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division will inform the minister prior to this meeting that the production program has started. The Chief, Naval Staff approves the requested allocations. (1/Skl 1473/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part B, Vol.V.)

V. On 19 May in the presence of the Air Force Specialist on the Naval Staff, the Fleet Commander looked at new plane models and a radio buoy at the testing plant at Rechlin and got the latest information on Air Force long range navigation. (1/Skl I L 1494/43 Gkdos Chefs.)

VI. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch, following a reorganization of the command posts, issued executive regulations covering the command powers of the individual commanders. (1/Skl 15205/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C a.)

VII. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submits No. 9/43 in the series "Reports on the Enemy Situation". Special attention must be drawn to the massed transfer of special transports with long cruising range to the western Mediterranean. It is to be noted that the increased tempo in the British supply traffic has continued, which points to a constant increase in British stocks of vital goods. (1/Skl 13110/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Vol. "Enemy Situation Reports".)

VIII. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submits the latest information on British types of landing craft. (1/Skl 15693/43 geh. in War Diary, Vol. "Material on the Enemy Situation".)

Situation 23 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Our Air Force sighted two steamers and one patrol boat off Cape St. Vincent on the evening of 22 May. One of the boats was seriously damaged by bombs.

Thirty enemy planes were operating over the Bay of Biscay. Two vessels were located off the Bay of Biscay.

According to an agents report the British are planning to land south of Bordeaux.

2. Own Situation:

Five mines were swept off the Atlantic coast.

Channel Area:

Enemy fighters attacked a convoy between St. Malo and Guernsey on the morning of 23 May. One coastal sailing vessel sank.

One of the guns of the 15 cm railway battery was lifted off the track during an attack on Zeebrugge.

Our PT boats were dispatched on mine fouling operations during the night of 23 May. No report on results has yet been received.

Special Items.

Naval Group Command West reports details of negotiations with the French concerning French ship construction material in connection with a conference with the Chief, Naval Staff at Group West on 22 May. The Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping had requisitioned material which had been expressly granted to the French in the armistice treaty. Protests against the delivery of this material have been lodged by the French, because of the effect it is felt this will have on the workers in the docks. These men see themselves menaced with unemployment after the war as a result of the confiscation of material.

Group West fears a considerable impairment of work hitherto accomplished in the dockyard, should the French assumption prove correct. (See Telegram 1850.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Twelve ground mines were swept off the Frisian islands. A convoy of six steamers putting out from the Elbe River on 23 May was escorted by seven patrol boats, five minesweepers, and two mine exploding vessels.

The escort and patrol duties within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out without special incident.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Reconnaissance over Jan Mayen and the naval area north of Iceland was without any sightings.

Two icebreakers and 11 freighters were in Molotovsk and 2 destroyers, 1 icebreaker, 1 tanker, and 31 freighters in Archangel, according to photographic intelligence.

Seven enemy planes were operating over the northern North Sea, and three planes of the Iceland squadrons were on patrol. Two Russian submarines were at sea off the Arctic coast.

Own Situation:

A convoy was attacked without success by ten torpedo planes off Vardoe. The enemy was forced to withdraw by the escorting fighters.

There were 27 ships escorted north and 25 south.

Special Items.

The Air Force Commander, Group Center announces that for the purpose of improving the fighter escort off the southern coast of Norway one fighter group is being reinforced with additional fighters.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

There has been brisk enemy air activity and shipping in the coastal area of Lovkolovo. There were ten Russian PT boats at sea off Tytersari on the evening of 23 May, and three on the morning of 24 May.

So far there are probably two submarines operating between the barrages "Seeigel" and "Nashorn", one of which is damaged, and a third one is about to pass through "Seeigel". Russian planes are continuously attacking our barrage patrol vessels.

2. Own Situation:

Six steamers, two tankers, and one submarine were escorted within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. The floating dock for Narvik is en route from Copenhagen to the north. Ten vessels were on operations sweeping the channels. One mine was swept in the Kattegat and one off Skagen.

The report on torpedo tracks north of Rixhoeft was doubted. It has now been reported that an experienced submarine commander and skilled submarine crews have definitely sighted the tracks.

The ferry service Sassnitz - Trelleborg has been stopped by the Reich Railway Directorate for the District of Stettin. The 25th Minesweeper Flotilla has been detailed to the Coastal Defense Commander, Baltic for the reinforcement of the anti-submarine patrol in that region.

The 100 per cent clear sweep of the "Warthburg" barrage continues according to plan.

Three troop transports which were supposed to go from Danzig to Jacobstadt have been halted because of suspected submarines and lack of escort forces.

An air raid on Reval (Tallinn) on the evening of 22 May did not cause any damage.

Special Items.

The prisoner picked up from a Russian submarine off Reval (Tallinn) declares that his boat was the first submarine that had put out from Lavansaari with orders to gather experiences for a break-through from the Gulf of Finland.

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

A reliable agent reported from Lisbon on 21 May that ships are not permitted to put out from Lisbon for the U.S.A., so as to avoid meeting large U.S. troop convoys.

It is alleged that 45 American auxiliary carriers were operational at the end of May.

2. Own Situation:

Six boats of Group "Mosel" which had been searching for the HX convoy reported within a very brief period of time carrier- and land-based planes. Already the preceding day, two boats had been forced to start on their return passage because of bomb damage. Further search for the convoy has been broken off because of the strong air escort. One boat briefly intercepted the convoy in the rain. No attack followed.

As a result of bomb damage the submarine U "752" was forced to surface in the vicinity of the convoy and had to scuttle herself following an attack by a destroyer.

The serious submarine losses this month, which have so far amounted to 30 to 40 boats, make temporary changes in the operational methods hitherto adopted in submarine warfare necessary.

The air patrol over the Bay of Biscay and the air escort of the convoys which have steadily increased in the course of the past year have been still further increased by the employment of auxiliary carriers, which was ascertained for the first time this month by the observation of numerous carrier-based planes. It is a fact that the enemy has launched additional patrol of the entire convoy route by air and naval forces besides the direct escort of its convoys. The excellent location gear developed by the enemy, which is particularly effective when used by their Air Force, is without any counter-acting device on our side and endangers the submarines acutely because of the element of surprise. According to information available the most serious losses occurred en route through the Bay of Biscay and on passage to the operational area as well as in the waiting position. In comparison, the losses sustained while in action against the convoys themselves were slight.

One convoy battle stands out as an exception to this rule, as particularly unfavorable conditions were prevailing at the time. These losses, which are unbearable in the long run, can at present only be bridged by special precautionary measures while en route and in the waiting position, whereby other disadvantages will have to be taken into account. In addition, they make it imperative that the North Atlantic, the main theater of the submarine war and the one in which the greatest successes have been achieved, be bared to a large extent and

a shift into other operational areas be made until such time as counter-measures promising success can be adopted (torpedo against destroyers, reinforced anti-aircraft armament of the boats, and elimination as far as possible of enemy location). This action is necessary in order to reduce losses and to gather forces that can then again be employed together with new weapons in the North Atlantic. Today it is still uncertain what effects these counter-devices developed by us will have, but they hold promise of success.

It is, therefore, proposed to detail the majority of the boats to operations outside the N orth Atlantic and to continue combatting the convoys here with one group under favorable combat conditions only (new moon period).

In the months to come, therefore, it must not be expected that the number of ships sunk, which has hitherto been low, will increase.

Special Items.

Naval Staff, Submarine Division has issued executive orders for the immediate fitting of submarines with quadruple mountings as was ordered by the Commander in Chief, Navy (1/Skl 15046/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV).

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

There were 146 planes including 117 fighters operating over the western area, and nine in the Mediterranean. Three enemy planes were shot down during the day. Two separate groups of FW 190's carried out low-level attacks on Hastings and Bornemonth.

The enemy flew over the western area by day in great strength.

Dortmund was raided during the night. This raid was the most severe so far on Reich territory. Serious damage was caused to industrial establishments and living quarters. Seventy-one of our own night fighters shot down 22 enemy planes. The anti-aircraft artillery shot down eleven planes.

2. Mediterranean Area:

Jijelli was raided by 17 bombers on the night of 23 May.

3. Eastern Front:

The Volga River was again fouled with mines on 22 May.

4. Northern Waters.

A steamer of 3,000 BRT was sunk by a fighter-bomber east of the Ribachi peninsula on 22 May.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

Gibraltar: The ADVENTURE together with a destroyer put out into the Mediterranean early on 23 May. Eleven freighters and two tankers coming from the Mediterranean joined a convoy of one transport, 17 freighters, and two tankers which had put out in the direction of the Atlantic at noon. Four transports carrying troops arrived from the Atlantic. Eleven freighters and one tanker left for the Mediterranean during the night.

Our air reconnaissance sighted the following:

Off Oran 5 to 6 ships putting in, 1 large steamer northwest of La Calle, 2 freighters northeast of Bone, 3 destroyers off Cape Serat, and 23 vessels entering Bizerta, possibly landing craft originating from Jijelli, where photographs showed a noticeable change in the landing craft. Six destroyers and 2 torpedo boats were at sea off Kelibia, and 4 steamers east of Kerkenah were escorted by 5 destroyers. One cruiser, 1 destroyer, 2 PT boats, and 2 freighters were at sea off Malta. On the evening of 21 May Pantelleria reported 21 merchantmen or warships south of the island steering southwest.

Enemy submarines have been reported off Ragusa and north of the Straits of Messina.

It has been reported from Sweden that the enemy is planning to penetrate into the Black Sea through the Dardanelles with a fleet, in order to carry out a landing in Bulgaria and Rumania.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Two submarine chasers put into La Spezia; a third submarine chaser is being used for the convoy duties Messina - Naples and has so far repulsed ten air attacks without suffering damage.

Ten auxiliary motor minesweepers arrived at Genoa coming from Cannes.

One of our reconnaissance planes detected a minefield 50 miles east of Toulon early on 23 May and caused a drifting mine to explode. The position must be checked, as the water depth there amounts to 2,000 m.

Further minefields were detected 40 miles east of Palermo, 20 miles northeast of Messina, and near Cape Punto Stilo, where five mines were swept. Mines are suspected on the west coast of Sardinia.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The convoy service to the islands met with no special incidents.

Special Items.

I. The establishment of the 10th Landing Craft Flotilla has been reported consisting of Siebel ferries taken over by the Navy (see Telegram 2100).

II. The German Naval Command, Italy had been requested to give equal consideration to the Sardinia and Peloponnese traffic when distributing the escort forces. (See War Diary, Part A, 17 May.)

In this connection the German Naval Command, Italy reports that at present only two escort vessels and one anti-aircraft corvette are operational, and that this number will only slightly improve in the near future. In view of the severe wear and tear on the Italian convoy escorts, these vessels will be used mainly in the Sardinia - Corsica traffic. Instead, the Italian Navy has increased its own escort forces in the Adriatic - Aegean traffic. (1/Skl 1516/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

III. The Military Attaché in Rome, in a report on the fighting strength of the Italian Armed Forces, states that they failed everywhere, because they were inadequately equipped, the officers corps insufficiently trained, and because most soldiers were mentally unprepared. The nucleus of the Italian Army was annihilated in Africa, Greece, and Russia. The remaining Air Force is technically out of date and only in a restricted degree operational. The armament for the coastal defense is entirely inadequate. True, the Italian Armed Forces High Command is anxious to get the most out of the Armed Forces and industry, but the peak of preparedness and the efficiency have deteriorated to such an extent that Italy's slight contribution to the war will probably sink still further. Hope of successfully repelling a large-scale enemy offensive against Italy could only be expected given strong German support.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy planes attacked our vessels at various places. Therefore an order has been issued for the entire Aegean area prohibiting the sailing of Spanish vessels and motor sailing vessels by day. The convoy traffic in the Aegean Sea was carried out without special incident.

The Commander of the island of Milos reports that one heavy anti-aircraft battery consisting of three guns is ready for action.

An enemy submarine sank a Turkish steamer southeast of Castel Rosso on 19 May, it has been learned retrospectively. Group South suggests that this incident be exploited for its propaganda value. (See Telegram 2125.)

Black Sea:

Radio intelligence intercepted a destroyer in the northeastern Black Sea.

Weather conditions did not permit PT boat operations.

One of our convoys was attacked by an enemy bomber off Sudak.

The naval artillery lighters MAL's "1" to "3" are at present at Kerch. The MAL "4" is ready for operations in Constanta, the MAL's "8", "9", "10", and "11" are being assembled in Constanta.

The sea convoys were impeded by the weather conditions. One ferry barge ran aground south of the Taman peninsula. The ferry service ran to schedule.

Special Items.

Group South reports that the transfer of the five river minesweepers from Linz to the escort service in the Black Sea was ordered prior to the reorganization of the Danube Flotilla in accordance with a request from the Admiral, Black Sea. The Group regards the employment of all available vessels on escort service in the Black Sea as a compelling necessity. (See Telegram 2124.)

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Lord Winster, a former Private Secretary to the British Admiralty voiced his opinion in the "Evening Standard" on the shipping situation in the Mediterranean, stating that the Mediterranean is a kind of "no-man's land" for which both sides would have to fight hard. As long as the Axis occupies the northern shores of the Mediterranean, allied shipping is seriously menaced. Every fast convoy through the Mediterranean represents a large-scale military operation:

The slow and less important convoys will have to be routed round the Cape as before.

The Allied Headquarters announce that minesweepers are engaged in sweeping channels through the minefields which were laid by the Axis off Tunis.

Report
from the Chiefs, Naval Ordnance Division and Bureau of Naval Armament on 24 May 1943 to the Commander in Chief, Navy on a conference with the Executive Staff of the Minister for Armament and Ammunition, Speer.

A. The allotted iron quota amounts to 50,000 t less than the necessary requirements. With it, it will be possible to carry out the submarine construction program, but not the construction of surface vessels.

A continuous increase in the quota cannot be expected. The Speer Staff hopes to gain time, and thereby iron, by a fast output in the production of iron. It is to be anticipated that as a result of these improved measures an additional 30,000 t may be achieved at least once. An increase in the steel production may not be expected as the coal output is lagging behind the anticipated results.

Under these conditions the proposed large-scale program cannot be carried out, as it is exceptionally exposed to interruptions, especially so in view of the air raids. The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division sees the only way to an improvement in the Commander in Chief, Navy securing from the Fuehrer a larger quota.

The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff points out that the Navy on carrying out the construction program will have to be accorded priority as regards personnel as well, as otherwise the situation may arise that material is available but not the men to build the ships, and that ships are built with no men to man them.

Naval Staff raises the question as to whether it would be correct to construct the proposed number of escort forces if no counter-defense against the superior enemy air force can be built up at the same time and whether it would not be better to make a portion of the material available for the construction of fighters. Against this there speaks the necessity of having available sufficient

replacements for the losses in escort forces which must be anticipated. The air superiority of the enemy is the pivot of the present crisis.

The Chief, Naval Staff faces the crucial decision of either requesting the Fuehrer to increase the submarine construction program from 25 to 40 boats a month or to cancel the increased construction plans. In this connection the Fuehrer must be told that the construction program cannot be carried out with the present quota and that the sea-borne supply services will therefore break down some day. It must be taken into consideration that the increase of the submarine construction program to 40 boats brings in its wake tremendous personnel requirements. So far, the pursuit of a clear course in submarine construction has always been correct. We possess a very good weapon in the shape of the 500 t-boat. It has unfortunately been rendered ineffective for the present by an electrical device invented by the enemy. We are therefore forced to master the location issue with all the means in our power, it will then no longer be necessary for the submarines to fear the enemy air force, and once the Walther submarine is in action, there will no longer be any threat from the air.

The Chief, Naval Staff plans to make a thorough investigation of these questions in the course of this week and will then report to the Fuehrer. The Chief, Naval Staff is thoroughly aware that there is severe shortage everywhere which causes all these difficulties.

B. Speer has promised to deliver the sheet iron and sections necessary for the reinforced anti-aircraft armament of the submarines. The Chief, Naval Staff considers that the delivery of the guns for the submarines is too slow and intends, if need be, to take steps with Speer. The Chief, Artillery Branch, Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Ordnance Division reports that the Deputy for these questions in the Speer Ministry is aware of the need for the urgent delivery of arms and that faster delivery can hardly be expected.

C. The Speer Ministry confirmed the exemption from military service for the workmen employed with the Navy. Nevertheless, only 300 of the 6,000 skilled workers promised have so far been supplied, and the supply of an extra 1,500 is the most that can be reckoned with. It is planned to obtain the remaining 4,500 by not calling them up for service in the next draft. The Chief, Naval Staff has arranged for the personnel question be settled in broad outline with the Speer Ministry.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Liaison with Foreign Office, Naval Staff, Operations Division, Operations Branch reports that the Italian Government did not support the agreement of the Italian Navy to the setting up of a French Symbolic Navy, on the contrary, it is against such a gesture. As a result of the Fuehrer's view that all this was a matter for Italy, Germany concurred in the original attitude

of the Italian Navy and thereby secured concessions from the French Navy. Following the reversal in the Italian opinion there is a noticeable stiffening in the French attitude and it is to be feared that the Navy will meet with unpleasant difficulties in its plans with respect to dockyard matters. The Italian Admiral Tur who promised the French a "marine symbolique", has in the meantime been relieved of his post.

II. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that LST's have been routed to the Red Sea via the Cape for the first time.

The Swedish Press has recently published frequent articles of hateful content directed against Germany.

Special Items.

I. Group West once more requested that the minelayers POMMERN and BRANDENBURG be assigned for the laying of barrages on the south coast of France. Following an investigation of this matter, it is found possible to release one ship for this duty. Naval Staff, however, is not in agreement with the use of this valuable individual ship without suitable escort forces and has rejected the request of the Group. The Group's attention is drawn to the minelayer GUEPE. (1/Skl I E 15137/43 Gkdos.)

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch suggested using minesweepers for the Torpedo School (submarine torpedo training). Naval Staff realizes that this will impose a severe strain on the escort forces, on the other hand there is no other way of carrying out the necessary training. Naval Staff, therefore, agrees to the suggestion of Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch, and accepts the disadvantages to the escort services resulting therefrom (1/Skl III a 15544/43 Gkdos.).

III. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch has requested the Naval (Ship) Construction Division to find out how far the PT boat construction program requested by the Naval Staff can be increased, (numbers to be given), taking into account both constructional facilities and engines. (1/Skl 15173/43 Gkdos.)

IV. The Admiral, Landing Craft and Bases submitted a suggestion for the construction of LCA's. Naval Staff agrees in principal with this suggestion; as however the war situation holds no promise of a landing operation in the near future, only the drawings and the construction of a model for trial purposes can be authorized, in view of the present material, personnel and dockyard situation. (1/Skl I op. a 14795/43 Gkdos.)

V. The Naval Office, Marseilles suggested, among others to the Reich Commissioner for Maritime Shipping, that it would be possible to draw skippers and mechanics from the area of the Admiral, Landing Craft and Bases for the peniches which are to be used in the Mediterranean. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch requests that this idea be put right, as it is not in accordance with actual facts, and asks the Naval Office, Marseilles, to report details on the available peniches. (1/Skl 15109/43 Gkdos.)

Situation 24 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The CHARLOTTE SCHLIEMANN left Kobe on 22 May bound for Singapore, in order to be used there for supplying submarines.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Our air reconnaissance sighted ten vessels off Newcastle. A convoy of 73 merchantmen and three destroyers on northerly course was sighted about 180 miles northwest of Cape St. Vincent in the afternoon. Another one of 22 merchantmen, one carrier and seven escort vessels was 30 miles southwest of this convoy.

There were 40 enemy planes operating over the Bay of Biscay.

Air reconnaissance located seven vessels off the Bay of Biscay.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Nothing special to report.

Channel Area:

It is reported retrospectively that five boats of the 2nd and seven of the 4th and 6th PT Boat Flotillas laid their mines according to schedule. Seven boats of the 5th PT Boat Flotilla were located on the approach. Air attacks on the boats were unsuccessful because of the low cloud. The fouling has apparently not been noticed by the enemy.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Three mines were swept off the Frisian islands, a mine-exploding vessel was damaged during this operation.

One of our own convoys under heavy escort was attacked by 40 bombers and torpedo planes, escort forces shot down seven planes, four others caught fire and were lost sight of. No damage was suffered by our own forces. Our fighters did not arrive until after the engagement. The remaining escort and patrol duties were carried out without any particular incident.

2. Norway:

Our air reconnaissance sighted two merchantmen west of the Faeroes and one fishing smack north of Iceland.

According to radio intelligence two Russian submarines were off the Arctic coast; seven planes were operating over the North Sea, and two planes of the Iceland squadrons were operating.

Only a few salvoes were exchanged with the Russian batteries on the Ribachi peninsula on 22 May.

There were 23 ships escorted north and 16 south.

Four submarines were in the operational area.

Special Items.

I. The Naval Chief Command, Norway reports that it is impossible to lay an anti-torpedo barrage in front of the harbor of Hammerfest because of the wind and the seaway and that an individual protection is being set up in front of the submarine anchorages. (Telegram 1949.)

II. The Naval Chief Command, Norway has been informed that the 8th PT Boat Flotilla will be withdrawn to Home Waters in the near future for engine overhaul. (Telegram 1704.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Own Situation:

Danish minesweepers cleared two mines off Nyborg.

In the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic, 5 steamers, 1 tanker,

and 2 submarines were escorted, 12 vessels and 1 magnetic minesweeping plane were dispatched to sweep the channels. The ferry service to Trelleborg has been resumed once more.

One ground mine exploded in front of a torpedo recovery vessel off Gdynia.

The submarine hunt carried out by twelve boats off Rixhoeft was unsuccessful. The warning against suspected submarines was cancelled during the night.

Our own submarine chaser group off the Seeigel barrage was attacked from the air without special damage in the evening of 23 May, one plane was shot down.

Finnish guard ships sank two Russian guard ships north of Seiskari.

The first net barrage line was laid south of Nargoen. The 100 per cent clearance sweep of the Warthburg barrage was continued.

Escort duties were carried out without any special incident.

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

After the close of the convoy operation, the boats are being launched again; those boats which have a good supply of fuel on hand are to sail south. They will be disposed southwest of the Azores on the convoy route between America and Gibraltar. The patrol line to be formed there consists of 17 boats. The twelve boats remaining in the North Atlantic are being set up in offensive areas southeast of Greenland and are to feign a strong group of submarines by making corresponding radio traffic.

The anti-aircraft submarine achieved her first success in the Bay of Biscay by shooting down a Sunderland. On this occasion the boat was bombed and had to start on her return passage in a condition that made her unable to dive.

One boat on her outward passage was likewise so heavily bombed in the western part of the Bay of Biscay that it was forced to turn back.

A submarine intercepted a convoy of six steamers off Iceland, but was forced by planes to withdraw.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

The 3rd Air Force dispatched 28 planes on operations in the western area and six in the Mediterranean. Enemy activity over the western area in the course of the day was slight. No planes flew over during the night of 24 May.

Seventy-three bombers raided Sunderland with good results on the night of 23 May. For details see Daily Situation.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Thirty-two planes attacked the harbor of Bone on the night of 24 May.

Three enemy planes raided Jijelli.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

On 24 May two destroyers left Gibraltar bound for the Atlantic, and a cruiser bound for the Mediterranean. Cape Spartel and Tangier report a convoy of 32 landing craft transports, 4 tankers, 2 destroyers, and 26 submarine chasers sailing in the direction of the Mediterranean. Alboran reports one minelayer, presumably the ADVENTURE, together with one destroyer on easterly course.

Air reconnaissance reports the following:

in Bone: 6 transports, 8 small vessels;
off Bone: 4 destroyers;
off Bizerta: 3 destroyers;
in Bizerta according to photographic reconnaissance: 1 tanker, 2 steamers, 9 landing craft of various sizes, 8 motor boats and 2 patrol boats;
off Sousse: 4 ships, 12 small vessels;
in La Valetta: 3 light cruisers, 13 destroyers, 6 submarines, 2 LCT's, 5 gunboats, 13 freighters, 2 tankers and 9 ships on inward passage.

The Italian Navy reports four destroyers and four ships southwest of Lampedusa on the afternoon of 23 May.

Reliable agents reported on 21 May that no traffic worth noting has been observed in Beirut during the last two weeks. Another reliable agent reports from Tripoli (Syria) more than 100 landing craft.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

The 3rd PT Boat Flotilla carried out a mining operation according to plan on the evening of 23 May.

The torpedo boat of foreign origin TA "9" transferred from Leghorn to La Spezia.

One anti-aircraft corvette arrived in Leghorn, another one is en route to Leghorn. Two further ones will presumably be ready for operations on 28 and 30 May respectively at the same time as the minelayers POMMERN and BRANDENBURG.

One submarine chaser is in Genoa, non-operational, a second is on escort duty.

Ten auxiliary motor minesweepers are en route from Genoa to La Spezia.

Six more mines were swept off Cape Stilo.

The following air raids have been reported:

On Alghero (Sardinia) and Pantelleria, damage has not been reported;
on Maddalena, slight damage;
on Eubia (Sardinia), extensive damage in the city; one steamer of 7,000 BRT carrying ammunition and service gear has burned out;
on Vena Fioritia (Sardinia), damage has not yet been reported;
on San Giovanni and Reggio, damage at numerous places.

Nine enemy planes in all were shot down.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The tanker CARNARO (8,400 BRT) escorted by a torpedo boat en route to Taranto was torpedoed by a submarine near Cape Spartivento early on 24 May. The ship is lying stopped and burning.

All other convoy traffic ran without any special incident.

Special Items.

I. The German Staff attached to the Italian Admiralty has submitted a preview of the situation concerning the escort of supply shipments to Sicily and Sardinia. In conclusion, a heavy escort for shipping is demanded, which in the southern part will have to be carried out as far as possible with small and well-armed vessels.

The escort vessels at present available and those to be added in the near future will be fairly able to deal with mines and submarines. However, the defense of the islands for any period is only possible if the Air Force is strong enough to counter the enemy adequately. (1/Skl 14461/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

It has been reported that several sailing vessels were bombed and machine-gunned by enemy planes on 22 May. Similar attacks took place on 23 May.

Own Situation:

The minelayer DRACHE put into Piraeus from Salonica carrying a cargo of mines.

The three motor boats from the French area assigned to the Aegean Sea arrived in Piraeus.

Convoy traffic took place without any special incident.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff requests Group South to get all data on Italian coastal fortifications in the Greek area available there, or procure it from Italian quarters. (1/Skl 15139/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

II. Group South reports the re-naming of the steam-tanker PETRAKIS NOMIKOS to WILHELMSBURG. The tanker is to pass through the Dardanelles in the near future. (1/Skl 14985/43 Gkdos.)

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

There was slight shipping off the Caucasian coast according to the air reconnaissance. Photographic reconnaissance showed four motor minesweepers, 25 PT boats and seven coastal vessels in Gelenjik. The number of the PT boats is going to be counter-checked. There were 222 boats found lying in the lagoon harbors of the southeast coast of the sea of Asov.

Own Situation:

PT boats were not on operations because of the weather conditions.

Two naval landing craft were fired on by an enemy submarine northeast of Yalta on the forenoon of 23 May. The naval landing craft scored three hits on the conning tower. The boat dived on the spot without forward speed, further details could not be observed. One naval landing craft was damaged.

The convoy steam-tanker CELENO-PRODROMOS, which was escorted by two Rumanian destroyers, two Rumanian gunboats and two motor minesweepers, was attacked by a submarine three miles north of the approach buoy of Sevastopol. Three torpedoes missed their mark, one torpedo detonated right in front of a motor minesweeper, which was slightly damaged. The submarine hunt which followed immediately was without results.

A supplementary report concerning the submarine attacks on naval landing craft on 21 and 22 May states that the boats were attacked with two torpedoes each, damage was not inflicted.

An air raid on Feodosiya on the forenoon of 23 May caused slight damage to buildings.

Five naval landing craft were attacked from the air in the southern exit to the Kerch Strait; no damage resulted.

The submarine U "9" has been assigned the area between Cape Idokopas and Tuapse because the supply traffic there is heavy at present.

The net tasks on the anti-torpedo barrage Kamish - Burun have been completed.

The ferry service ran without special incident.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo reports that the Commanding Admiral of the Japanese Fleet undertook a reconnaissance flight over the Solomon Islands in a Mitsubishi bomber at the end of April. American fighters attacked in spite of strong fighter escort. The Admiral received an injury as a consequence of which he died shortly afterwards.

The Naval Attaché describes the death of the Admiral as a severe loss, since he was the most able leader, but regards his successor, Admiral Koga as the best substitute possible. (1/Skl 16873/43 geh.)

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Items of Political Importance.

The Chief of the American Anti-Submarine Defense on the east coast stated that within six months he hoped to be able to have the menace from the German submarines in North-American Waters under complete control by the ever increasing deliveries from the American aircraft factories and extensive use of blimps on coastal patrol.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Group South reported that the Italians are not acquainted with Fuehrer Directive No. 47, according to which a single command subordinate to the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southeast has been planned in the event of an enemy offensive in Greece. At present, the Italians themselves are setting up an Army Group there. Group South fears that the issue of the keyword "Viktoria", as soon as an enemy landing is detected will take place too late from the naval point of view and also that friction from Italian quarters must be expected. The Group therefore suggests that for the assumption of the naval command by Group South a special keyword for the naval warfare be issued in agreement with the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southeast.

The Chief, Naval Staff states that at present the political situation precludes more than ever any demand for further concessions from the Italians with regard to command, and that for this reason the request of Group South must be rejected. (1/Skl 1531/43 Gkdos. Chefs. and Skl. Qu. A II 1536/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

II. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports that the NUERNBERG is being transferred to Gdynia for an engine overhaul.

An investigation into the explosion on board the SCHARNHORST which took place some time ago did not bring to light its exact cause. The possibility of sabotage is assumed.

III. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that an agreement between Giraud and De Gaulle is apparently imminent.

During the Food Conference which is taking place in the U.S.A. and has not yet come to an end, differences of opinion have arisen with Russia, who has asked for considerably increased shipments of food.

In a Highly Restricted Circle.

IV. Group South submitted the plans for the laying of the barrages on the south and west coast of Greece. (1/Skl 1474 and 1493/43 Gkdos. Chefs.) The Naval Staff considers the plans practical. The Chief, Naval Staff has given his approval. The Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff points out that minefields off Corfu are not planned. Suggestions for the latter have been requested from Group South.

V. The Chief, Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division points out with the aid of a map the course of the demarkation line between the 2nd Air Force and the Air Force Command Southeast which is to be established shortly. (1/Skl 1529/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

VI. The Naval Air and Air Force Liaison Section, Naval Staff, Operations Division gives a report on the state and development of our own Air Force and the estimated condition of the enemy Air Force. The plans with regard to the construction of long-range reconnaissance planes are explained in detail. A comparison between our Air Force and that of the enemy reveals at present an enemy superiority of three to one.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Fleet Branch has informed front line quarters concerning the mine bombs that were used during the raid on the valley dams, and orders that moles, lock installations and similar objects are to be investigated for some method of protection against these bombs. (1/Skl 15201/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. X.)

The Naval Liaison Officer attached to the Air Force Prisoners' Transient Camp, Oberursel gives a detailed description of a mine bomb found near the valley dams. (1/Skl 15858/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. X.)

II. Vice Admiral Weichold has investigated the possibilities of operations against Gibraltar and submitted a report. An investigation of the possibilities reveals the necessity of procuring Spanish fishing vessels for specific operations. The political commitments attendent upon it will have to be carefully watched. On the other hand, the ever increasing traffic in the Straits of Gibraltar offers greater possibilities for operations. (1/Skl 1472/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

III. The Commander in Chief, Navy ordered the appointment of a deputy who is to check the manpower commitment of soldiers of all ranks. (For the fundamental decree by the General Naval Administration Bureau, Recruitment Division see 1/Skl 15877/43 geh.)

Situation 25 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

The Air Commander, Atlantic Coast attacked the convoy of 37 ships sighted off St. Vincent several times without success (see War Diary, Part A, 24 May). On this occasion brisk air combats with Catalina flying boats and carrier-borne fighters took place. The attacks by enemy planes were repulsed. It can be concluded from this operation that the new armament of the FW 200's is satisfactory. The large convoy was again reported on the forenoon of 25 May 200 miles west of Lisbon steering north. Two passenger steamers and 14 merchantmen under escort of three destroyers on southwesterly course were reported 380 miles southwest of Brest.

Thirty-four enemy planes were operating off the Bay of Biscay. A radio guard ship was located 230 miles northwest of Porcupine Bank. Two additional vessels were located west of the Bay of Biscay and west of Spain.

2. Own Situation:

Area Atlantic Coast:

Escort forces are towing one of our own submarines into Brest which was adrift owing to a breakdown of the rudder. No report of arrival has yet been received.

Channel Area:

The 4th and 6th PT Boat Flotillas transferred from Peterport to Cherbourg.

The report concerning the minelaying operation of the 5th PT Boat Flotilla is supplemented to the effect that the boats were twice fired on from land and three times attacked from the air during the night, partly without warning.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

A mine-exploding vessel hit a mine north of Terschelling and had to be beached off Ameland.

Five mines were swept off the Frisian islands. The escort duties were carried out without any special incident. Strong escort forces are again being used for the Elbe - Hook convoys.

The Commander in Chief, Navy expressed his appreciation to the escort forces and the naval anti-aircraft aboard ship for having successfully repulsed the air attack of 24 May.

Special Items.

The Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North reports his plans for the execution of the second part of the minelaying Operation "Stemmbogen" (1/Skl 1437/43 Gkdos. Chefs.).

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

An agent who is on good terms with Soviet circles in Sweden reports that a large-scale offensive against Norway is said to be the main objective of a second front. (3/Skl FL 1936/43 Gkdos.)

Our air reconnaissance reports a merchantman north of Iceland. The ship was attacked without success.

The photographic evaluation of 24 May revealed four destroyers, one submarine, two tankers and seven freighters in Kola Bay, three freighters in Yokonga and three freighters off Kildin island.

According to radio intelligence two enemy submarines were off the Norwegian Arctic coast.

Six planes were over the North Sea; eight planes of the Iceland squadrons were operating.

Own Situation:

Twenty-three ships were escorted north and 15 south.

Special Items.

1. The Naval Chief Command, Norway reports the plan for closing the outer Malangenfjord to traffic. (See Telegram 1820.)

2. Naval Staff has rejected the request made by Naval Station North for assignment of the new escort motor minesweepers to the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North. (See War Diary, Part A of 22 May.) The boats remain assigned to the Naval Chief Command, Norway. (See Telegram 1703.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

The dead body of a sailor from a submarine was washed ashore near Strelna on 9 May. A sergeant who surrendered near Leningrad stated that a guard ship was sunk by gunfire from the battery "Koenigsberg" on the night of 30 Apr., and that a Russian submarine struck a mine and sank. Only three men of this boat were rescued. The survivor picked up from the Russian submarine confirms these details.

Brisk guard boat traffic in Kronstadt Bay at night.

2. Own Situation:

One steamer, one tanker, and two submarines were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Eleven vessels were sweeping the channels. One mine was swept in the Great Belt. The floating dock assigned to Narvik arrived in Kristiansand South on 26 May. The submarine patrol behind the Seeigel and Nashorn barrages was carried out without any special incident.

One new Russian air mine "2" was salvaged and exploded off Reval (Tallinn).

The 100 per cent clearance sweep of the Warthburg III barrage has been completed. Of the 600 EMC's and 600 explosive floats planted, 16 EMC's and 226 explosive floats were cleared in 22 working days.

On the basis of the combat report the Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic has recognized the annihilation of the submarine attacked by naval landing craft south of Vaindlo.

On the evening of 25 May anti-submarine alert north of Nargoen.

The escort duties were carried out according to plan.

Special Items.

The Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic requested the decision of Naval Staff with regard to operations by the boats of the 11th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla. The Naval Staff decides that action was to be taken in accordance with the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North and informed the Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic that it was not necessary to ask for a decision of the Naval Staff. (See Telegrams 0930 and 1709.)

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

One submarine intercepted the SC convoy bound for Great Britain. This boat was driven off by the naval escort.

Three boats were launched for operations north and south of Cape Hatteras. One boat established temporary contact with a convoy between Durban and East London, but was constantly driven off by the air escort.

On 23 May the third Italian transport submarine put out from Bordeaux bound for Japan.

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

On the evening of 25 May 19 FW 190's carried out a low-level attack on Folkestone. The majority of the fighters had to break off the raid because of fighter defense. One plane failed to return.

Individual planes flew over the west area by day. The Ruhr district was raided during the night, attacks concentrating on Duesseldorf. Damage of medium extent in the city. Seventeen planes were shot down by fighters, five by anti-aircraft artillery.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Bone was once more attacked during the night of 25 May; on this occasion a cruiser was hit by three bombs. Bizerta was raided on the night of 25 May. No report on results has been received.

Italian long-range bombers carried out harassing raids on Port Sudan and on an air base near Asmara, according to press reports.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

On 25 May a large transport with three escort vessels and shortly afterwards a battleship of the PRINCE OF WALES class with three destroyers put into Gibraltar.

Ceuta reports the passing of eleven transports and an aircraft carrier eastbound on the night of 25 May.

Air reconnaissance reports the following:

off Bougie:	16 vessels course west;
off Bone:	17 large and 30 small vessels course east; later on north of Cape Ferat, apparently the same formation;
east of Bizerta:	11 vessels;
in Bizerta:	likewise 11 vessels;
in Tunis:	for the first time - 3 vessels;
off Kelibia:	1 destroyer;
south of La Galite:	2 fairly large vessels;
in Benghazi:	13 small naval vessels and 11 freighters and 12 small vessels;
east of Rasel Tin:	an eastbound convoy of 6 steamers and 8 escort vessels;
putting out of Alexandria:	10 medium-sized freighters, 3 to 5 destroyers, and 4 escort vessels.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

The 3rd PT Boat Flotilla carried out another mining operation south of Sicily on the evening of 24 May.

The torpedo boat of foreign origin TA "9" was used for the escort duties Genoa - Toulon. Ten auxiliary motor minesweepers put into La Spezia.

Two motor minesweepers in process of transfer are being detained in Châlon sur Saone as a result of the low water level on the Rhone.

Numerous air attacks on the Italian mainland and islands took place.

Serious damage was caused in the harbor and city of Messina; one plane was shot down.

The airfield of Trapani was raided; damage to buildings; five planes shot down.

An attack was also carried out on the airfield of Palermo; several planes were damaged, two planes shot down.

On the afternoon of 24 May Olbia was attacked with heavy forces. The steamer JANA (5,535 BRT) is lying on the bottom and burning itself out. The Italian steamer NIRVO (5,164 BRT) has sprung several leaks caused by flying bomb fragments,is lying on the bottom alongside the jetty and is on fire. Serious damage was inflicted in the harbor and the town. The attack on Olbia was repeated on the night of 24 May. The Italian ammunition plant was burned out.

A third raid took place on the afternoon of 25 May without damage being inflicted. Two planes were shot down.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The escort duties were carried out without any special incident. The torpedoed tanker CARNARO has been towed into Messina.

Special Items.

1. The Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff informs the Naval Staff that it has become known from a reliable source in Turkey that an attack by air and naval forces on Pantelleria and Lampedusa has been planned to take place between 23 and 30 May. (See Telegram 1703.)

2. The German Naval Command, Italy reports that the Italian Armed Forces High Command have asked for certain steamers which were destined for the Aegean Sea for the supply of the islands and reports that a number of these steamers have in the meantime been made available for a single trip. A basic ruling is requested, which in the opinion of the German Naval Command, Italy rests with the Armed Forces High Command Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas. (See Telegram 2130.)

3. Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, Quartermaster Division requests a report from the Chief, Supply and Transport, Italy and the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South, Operations Staff, Transports as to when ships assigned to the Aegean Sea will put out and why delays in the transfer occurred. (See Telegram 2000.)

4. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Shipping and Transport Branch submits two excerpts from the War Diary of the German Chief, Supply and Transport, Italy of 2 and 5 Apr. which contain an elaborate survey of the condition and commitment of the French merchantmen transferred to Italy and the new construction program for war transports and ferries. (1/Skl 14914 and 14915/43 Gkdos.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

An auxiliary sailing vessel was sunk by gunfire from an enemy plane off Kephalonia.

The suspicion that a Crete sailing vessel was smuggling oil, which was expressed on 20 May, has not been confirmed.

The escort duties were carried out without any special incident. Two German submarine chasers and two Italian PT boats from Piraeus arrived in Rhodes.

Special Items.

1. Group South reports on request of Naval Staff that the food supplies for Crete covering six months' requirements have been stored there and that fresh demands for further storage of food supplies for the island have not been submitted. (See Telegram 0930.)

2. Group South is being informed on the state of negotiations with the Spanish authorities with regard to the changing of flags by Spanish steamers in the Greek area. A final order is still awaited. The Spanish authorities have no objections to the German proposals. Since it is not a matter of a change of flags in the usual sense of the term, all official channels must be avoided. The Spanish crews will have to be payed off on some false pretext. (See Telegram 1704.)

3. By order of Armed Forces High Command, Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces, Overseas the western route Adriatic Sea - Greece is to be used for supplying Greece. It is not until enemy action increases that a switch to the eastern route Black Sea - Greece is to take place. Group South already considers the western route is seriously endangered and fears that it will be quickly cut off and the shipping available there blockaded when the enemy launch an offensive. The Group, therefore, requests that the supplies to Greece be switched to the eastern route immediately, and considers the speediest transfer of shipping destined for the Adriatic Sea - Greece sea-route necessary. In addition, the transfer of further escort forces to the Aegean for the safeguaring of the eastern route is requested. (1/Skl 15188/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV).

4. Naval Staff informs Group South as to how torpedo batteries for coastal defense can be set up, and requests the Group to report on proposals for the emplacement of torpedo batteries. (1/Skl 14927/43 Gkdos.)

Black Sea:

On the forenoon of 25 May a submarine attempted to attack the convoy of the tank steamer DRESDEN. The submarine was warded off by naval landing craft. The results of the pursuit with depth charges could not be ascertained. The same convoy was attacked by planes in the evening. An attack by four planes on the harbor of Feodosiya took place on the afternoon of 25 May. Damage was not reported.

The 1st PT Boat Flotilla put out on the afternoon of 25 May for operations between Cape Idokopas and Tuapse.

The new submarine U "18" will put out for the operational area on 26 May.

The steamer CHARKOW (6,689 BRT) ran aground off the Sevastopol approach buoy on 25 May. Attempts to tow her off have failed so far. Fighter and submarine escort have been dispatched.

The naval artillery lighter MAL "4" entered Sulina. The ferry service ran without any special incident.

Special Items.

The Commanding Admiral, Black Sea reports the exact position of the barrages laid out. (1/Skl 1538/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

VIII. Situation East Asia.

1. The German Embassy at Tokyo reports that the Japanese were definitely expecting an American offensive against the Philippine Islands some time in the future, but that they placed the greatest confidence in the well arranged defense system. The Japanese likewise feel safe in their other defense positions in the occupied territories. The Foreign Minister considers it possible that a conciliation with Chiang Kai-Shek may be brought about in the not too distant future. (1/Skl 15728/43 geh.)

2. The German Air Attaché toured the Japanese southern area and was able to visit numerous airfields and defense positions. He reports the Chiefs of the Japanese Armed Forces in the southern area believe that they have improved their defense system in such a way that the considerable superiority of the American Air Force in Australia and an extensive use of enemy submarines will not cause any serious difficulties. (1/Skl 15210/43 Gkdos.)

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Items of Political Importance.

At a press conference in Washington Churchill stated that the ever increasing superiority of the Allies in the production of arms will decisively influence the course of the war in time. The Allies are following the principle of bringing all their offensive powers to bear on as extended a front as possible. Churchill emphasized that he would rather count on the strength of the army to bring victory than on an internal break-down of the Axis. Great Britain very much desires to increase the intensity of the war against Japan. This issue has been discussed at great length during his stay in Washington. The main problem is the question of the distribution of allied forces, which is to a large extent dependent on transport facilities. The superiority in the matter of transports is quite as obvious as that in the air. The British and American leaders have resolved to continue the war in the Pacific with the utmost energy. On the question of a war between Russia and Japan Churchill was of the opinion that nothing further could be asked of Russia, who had already suffered heavy losses.

Roosevelt gave a report accounting for the deliveries under the Lend-Lease Agreement. Shipments to North Africa and the USSR amounted to 1,000 billion Dollars and 1,822 billion Dollars respectively. 30% of all Lend-Lease shipments go to Russia and consists almost entirely of war materiel. Shipments to Great Britain amount to 3,116 billion Dollars, i.e. 40% of the total shipments. The remaining shipments go to China, India, Australia and New Zealand. The largest portion of the armament material was shipped to Russia; Great Britain received the heaviest shipments in industrial products and food stuffs. In March 1943 only food was shipped to Russia.

Conference on the Situation with Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports on the statements made by Churchill at the press conference and points out that new Allied constructions must have amounted to 1,150,000 BRT in the past month.

Conference Restricted to a Very Limited Circle.

II. Admiral Weichold has investigated how attacks on the enemy communication lines in North Africa could be carried out by harassing squads. The operations can be carried out on an extensive coast and would tie down considerable enemy forces. Vice Admiral Weichold considers the men of the special division

"Brandenburg" unsuitable for this task, since it is a question of purely military offensive actions for which dashing volunteers are needed. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff considers it necessary that the Command of operations of this type be in the hands of a naval officer with a staff of officers from all the Armed services. The operations will have to be conducted over sea and will consequently be dependent on this element so that successful execution of such operations could only be expected if under the responsible command of a naval officer. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff is going to submit suggestions to the Chief, Naval Staff accordingly.

III. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff has ordered the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division to draw the particular attention of the subordinate commands in occupied territories to the security of secret matter. Secret matter not urgently required is to be taken to Germany or destroyed, and the destruction of all important matter in present use must be ensured at all costs. This order was particularly applicable to Italy.

IV. The Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff reports that a BV 222 has been transferred to the east, but that it still has to do night test flights to break in the crew, and will not be operational for two weeks yet.

As the first BV 222's are still equipped with gasoline engines, the supply of fuel by submarines is still a problem.

Special Items.

I. Group North has submitted the preliminary operational order revised by Admiral, Northern Waters for the commitment of the Task Force in Northern Waters (keywords "Skagerrak" and "Ostfront".) To this order, the Commanding Admiral, Task Force suggested an amendment which was incorporated later following its acceptance by Group North. (1/Skl 1429, 1442 and 1457/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

II. Naval Staff has once more checked the distribution of motor minesweepers in order to meet with the request of the German Naval Command, Italy for the allocation of additional motor minesweepers, as the operational condition of the boats of the 6th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla available in the Mediterranean is

very poor. The request has been recognized by the Naval Staff as fully justified. Orders have been issued that the 11th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla, at present under the Commander, Minesweepers, Baltic and destined for assignment to the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North is to be transferred to the Mediterranean following the completion of the minesweeping operations on the "Warthburg" barrages. (1/Skl I op 15142/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. d.)

III. Naval Staff decrees that the UMB is no longer to be used with fixed surface disarming gear, as it violates the Hague Convention, and has issued orders for a substitute device for this mine. (1/Skl I E 15099/43 Gkdos; also see War Diary, Part A, 17 May 1943.) A British objection to the use of this mine, voiced through diplomatic channels, was the cause of this order.

IV. The German Armistice Commission, Navy Section submitted a report on co-operation with the French Navy and is in favor of complying with the French wishes with a view to maintaining the good will of the French Navy. Naval Staff supports the proposal of the German Armistice Commission, Navy Section as submitted to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff (1/Skl I cd 15189/43 Gkdos.).

V. The Foreign Office and the Armed Forces High Command, Foreign Section dealt with the question, submitting it to the Italians, as to whether a certain protection for the transportation by sea of captured Axis soldiers might be secured by agreement. All quarters concerned, however, are fully aware that a German step will only be of use if far reaching concessions are made on the part of Germany. Nothing can be done at present by the Naval Staff. It remains to be seen whether such a step will be taken and with what wishes the Armed Forces High Command will approach the High Command, Navy. (1/Skl I i 15281/43 geh. and 1/Skl 15530/43 geh.)

Situation 26 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

The large convoy of 80 merchantmen was sighted 240 miles west-northwest of Lisbon on the evening of 26 May.

According to radio monitoring only two planes of the 19th Group were operating over the Bay of Biscay. Three vessels were located in the eastern North Atlantic.

2. Own Situation:

One mine was swept off the Gironde.

The FALKE and the torpedo boat T "22" en route to St. Malo cast anchor in the Brest roadstead.

The MOEWE, GREIF and JAGUAR put into Cherbourg from Le Havre. The mining operation by PT boats had to be cancelled because of poor visibility and fog.

In Calais one harbor defense boat was rammed by a naval landing craft and sank.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Six mines were swept off the Frisian islands.

The patrol boats stationed off the Hook reported enemy PT boats on the night of 26 May but no engagement took place. At the same time patrol boats stationed north of Terschelling had an engagement with enemy PT and gunboats. One PT boat was set on fire. One patrol boat suffered slight damage.

Salvage work on the mine-exploding vessel "173" had to be broken off, as the salvage facilities were inadequate; the vessel is about to break in two.

The escort duties were carried out without special incident.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Radio intelligence intercepted five Russian submarines off the Arctic coast.

Seven planes were operating over the North Sea and seven in the Zeeland region.

Planes have been reported over Petsamo, Banak and Vardoe without attacking.

Own Situation:

One mine was swept off Arnoey.

The floating dock for Narvik towed by three tugs put out from Kristiansand South early on 26 May northbound. It is being escorted by two minesweepers, two submarine chasers, one patrol boat, four artillery ferries and planes.

Nine ships had to stay in Kristiansand South because of lack of escort vessels. Fifteen vessels were escorted north and 25 south. The meteorological station "Holzauge" was attacked and completely destroyed by four U.S. bombers at noon on 25 May. The crew withdrew into the mountains and still has a 70 watt transmitting station in working order. The flight of a Do "26" just planned for that day was, therefore, postponed until further notice. The crew of "Holzauge" has been ordered to salvage valuable material from the ship and to store supplies and fuel in a safe place.

Special Items.

Group North, Fleet had requested the transfer of the destroyers Z "27", Z "30" and the torpedo boat T "24" to southern Norway for participation in a mining operation and subsequent return of the boats to the northern area. In 1/Skl I op 1539/43 Gkdos. Chefs. the Naval Staff gives its consent and informs the Group that the fuel allotment will be made separately.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Heavy artillery fire in the coastal region in Kronstadt Bay, considerable material damage to the battery "Strelna". Our coastal batteries opened fire on a fairly large gun carrier and two submarines on the evening of 26 May. The fire was fiercely returned. On the night of 22 as also on 23 May brisk enemy fighting on the front line near Schepel. Several enemy bunkers were set on fire.

On the evening of 26 May one minesweeper sighted several PT boats east of Tytersari which withdrew under cover of a smoke-screen after having fired three torpedoes. A landing craft flotilla reports having sighted a submarine conning tower east of Porkalla. Two Russian PT boats advanced as far as north of Suursari on the night of 25 May withdrawing after having been fired on.

2. Own Situation:

Twelve steamers, three tankers and two submarines were escorted in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Fifteen vessels were dispatched to sweep the channels. Two British mines were exploded by gun-fire east of Hanstholm. One mine was swept off Arkona and one off Stollergrund.

North of Stollergrund one boat of the Minelaying Experimental Command sank after an explosion, apparently as the result of a depth charge while experimenting with the latter.

One infantry assault boat blew up 150 meters off the Samland coast, probably having struck a mine.

The cruiser NUERNBERG was off Gjedser en route to Gdynia on the evening of 26 May.

An enemy submarine was attacked south of Porkalla with the result that large quantities of oil spurted to the surface and packages of first aid bandages, cork and wooden parts began floating about. It is assumed that the boat was annihilated in the course of a pursuit with depth charges after having struck a mine in the "Nashorn" minefield. The spot where the submarine, which was damaged on 25 May, sank is still being watched. Its destruction is probable.

The 1st Motor Minesweeper Flotilla is engaged in sweeping the "Korbetha" minefield.

Troop transport traffic ran without special incident.

Special Items.

Naval Station Baltic on examining the mining and barrage measures taken in the Gulf of Finland found definite weak points in the barrage hitherto laid and requested the allocation of additional mines for an effective reinforcement and extension of the present minefield. Naval Staff complied with the request of Naval Station Baltic and issued orders for the mines to be supplied. In addition, it has been arranged for the patrol forces tc be reinforced by the 25th Minesweeper Flotilla as soon as completion of the work on the "Wartburg" barrage can be foreseen. Naval Station Baltic is yet to submit suggestions as to how the "Nashorn" barrages might be improved. (1/Skl 1530/43 Gkdos. Chefs. and 1/Skl 15220/43 Gkdos.)

V. Merchant Shipping.

Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Shipping and Transport Branch has submitted a record of transport carried out by the Navy in the years 1941 and 1942 (1/Skl 16024/43 geh. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XI).

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

Seventeen boats are being set up as Group "Trutz" west to southwest of the Azores where an eastbound convoy is expected.

On 24 May the enemy assumed about ten submarines to be in the area of this new patrol line. This assumption is very suspicious, as the area has rarely been occupied by submarines of late and will now be immediately reported by the enemy as a danger area following the appearance of our own submarines. There is no explanation of this available.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

145 planes of the 3rd Air Force were on operations in the western area and seven in the Mediterranean.

Air reconnaissance intercepted nine merchantmen and five escort vessels on northeasterly course 190 miles west-northwest of the Hebrides.

By day, individual fighter formations flew over the western area without carrying out raids; no incursion activity on the night of 26 May.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

In combatting enemy planes two were shot down by our fighters and three by anti-aircraft artillery.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

Special Items.

The Commander in Chief, Air has re-named the Air Force Command, East - Air Force Command "6". The commanders of the air forces who hitherto still had a designation corresponding to their operational area will in future carry only the official designation "Commander, Air Force". (For details see 1/Skl 15094/43 Gkdos.)

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The Italian repatriation ships SATURNIA and VULCANIA put out from Gibraltar for the Atlantic on the evening of 25 May.

The NELSON was no longer lying in Gibraltar on the forenoon of 26 May, her whereabouts are uncertain.

Tres Forcas reported on the morning of 25 May a convoy of 12 large vessels, one battleship, three destroyers, two escort vessels and one submarine heading for the Mediterranean. On the morning of 26 May one aircraft carrier of the ILLUSTRIOUS class put into Gibraltar.

Air reconnaissance reports:

In and off Bizerta 18 merchantmen and four PT boats;
in Bomba Bay one cruiser, several destroyers, and several merchantmen;
off Sidi Barani twelve merchantmen and ten destroyers course west, and somewhat west of this group, seven merchantmen and six to eight escort vessels course west;
south of Marsa Matruh six merchantmen and seven escort vessels course east;
off Linosa one enemy submarine was reported.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

One of our submarines has orders to cruise immediately east of Gibraltar and to attack only warships, troop transports, or large tankers. After the return of one boat which was damaged by bombs there are at present only two boats left in the western Mediterranean. On 26 May one boat attacked a convoy west of Algiers without result.

Two submarine chasers are en route to La Spezia, nine auxiliary motor minesweepers from La Spezia to Leghorn.

The enemy once more attacked several places on Sicily and Sardinia, the airfields of San Antioco and Villa Cidro on Sardinia without causing any particular damage; also the valley dam of Tirso, though results have not yet been reported. Two airfields on Sicily were attacked; on one of them several of our own planes were destroyed and damaged.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The escort duties to the islands were carried out according to plan. One Italian landing craft exploded from an unknown cause while en route from Palermo to Pantelleria on the evening of 21 May.

Special Items.

I. The Naval Attaché at Rome reports after conversations with leading officers of the Italian Navy that they are very depressed by the enemy air superiority. Admiral Ricardi expressed the view that even a short-term transfer of worthwhile German air forces and their operation against the enemy launching bases might have a decisive influence on the assembly of enemy forces. (Telegram 1249.)

II. Group West reported that the proposed barrage on the south coast of France will not be possible with the minelayer GUEPE, as the mine rail

welded on the GUEPE is suitable for French mines only. The discharging conditions in Bayonne and Fort Vendres have also been reported. The Group does not consider a diversion of the Red Cross ships to these ports necessary. Naval Staff has replied that it does consider the laying of the barrages "H 5 a to H 5 e", possible with GUEPE, as French mines have been provided for this task and points out that a diversion of the Red Cross ships may become necessary if objections should be raised by the enemy. (1/Skl I E 15251/43 Gkdos.)

4. Aegean Sea:

An attack by an enemy plane on an Italian auxiliary sailing vessel off Cerigo has been reported.

The escort duties were carried out according to plan.

Special Items.

In War Diary, Part A, 25 May 43 there is reference to Group South's request that supplies to the Aegean area via the Adriatic Sea be suspended and brought instead from the Black Sea. The Armed Forces High Command, Supply and Transportation Office of the Armed Forces Overseas decides that the shipping route from Trieste is to be used as heretofore, as it makes for a higher performance and is in part better defended. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, Southeast has been directed to make the necessary preparations for the transfer of the shipping to the Black Sea when enemy action increases. In this connection it is specially pointed out that transhipment in Braila and Galatz is not possible because of lack of escorts between the mouth of the Danube and the Dardanelles. (1/Skl 15364/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

5. Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance detected only slight shipping on the Caucasian coast.

Air raids on Yalta and Feodosiya caused no particular damage.

Own Situation:

The 1st PT Boat Flotilla had a short engagement with a gunboat and two patrol boats in the night of 25 May; no damage. En route to the operational area the flotilla was bombed and machine-gunned from the air; one boat suffered slight damage from bomb fragments.

The submarine U "18" left Constanta for operations on 26 May.

A renewed attempt at towing the steamer CHARKOW off Sevastopol has been unsuccessful so far.

The naval landing craft stranded on the south coast of Taman cannot be salvaged because of silting. The cargo and important parts are being salvaged. The naval artillery lighter MAL "4" is en route from Sulina to Odessa.

The ferry service ran without particular incident.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, German Naval Command, Italy reported that the ferry and discharging performances in Sardinia are satisfactory, whereas they are unsatisfactory in Sicily. As compared with a monthly requirement of 200,000 t for Sicily the daily performance sometimes dropped as low as 2,000 t. The air raids on the main ports caused serious damage. Only a small fraction of shipping which had to be called in to help has arrived and will have to be increased at all costs. It will not be possible to hand over any large vessels to the Aegean Sea. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South intends to report to the Fuehrer on this matter. (1/Skl 1548/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

The Chief, Naval Staff has arranged to find out to what extent the Navy can help out with the supply of small shipping.

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster General reports that the Acceptance Commissions of the Ordnance Departments have been combined into an Acceptance Inspectorate: later on the Acceptance Commission of the Naval (Ship) Construction Division is to be included.

III. Naval Staff, Operations Division, Foreign Affairs Section (Liaison with Foreign Office) reports that the Admiral of the French vessels in Alexandria replied to Laval that the scuttling of the ships would not be true to naval tradition, and that he would adhere to his resolution to transfer the ships to Africa.

In a Highly Restricted Circle:

IV. The Chief of Operations Branch, Naval Staff, Operations Division reports that Naval Staff plans to transfer the 11th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla to the Mediterranean in accordance with the request of the German Naval Command, Italy.

The Chief, Naval Staff agrees. (See War Diary, Part A, 26 May.)

V. Naval Staff has given much consideration of late to the question of how it might be possible to improve the coastal defense in the Mediterranean area. A Fuehrer directive transmitted to the Chief, Naval Staff by the Chief,

Armed Forces High Command has now been received, according to which the protection of the coasts of southern France and western Greece by coastal artillery and mining of inshore waters is to be prepared. (1/Skl 1524/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

In 1/Skl I op 1557/43 Gkdos. Chefs. the Naval Staff reports its plans to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff, and issues orders to Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division for the commitment of the required batteries.

VI. Naval Staff, in accordance with a verbal request from the Chief, Armed Forces Operations Staff to the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff, has examined further plans for the all-round conduct of the war and submitted a report to the Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff after approval by the Chief, Naval Staff. (1/Skl I b 1568/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. III.)

VII. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff has submitted a proposal to set up a "Brigade South" under command of Vice Admiral Weichold for harassing raids on the North African coast. (See preliminary discussion in War Diary, Part A, 26 May.) The Chief, Naval Staff agrees. The same proposal will be submitted to Armed Forces High Command, Operations Staff.

VIII. Minister Speer has urgently requested the Commander in Chief, Navy to place orders for the new construction program; the necessary steel will be procured in one way or another. The attitude of the Navy on this question is too cautious and quite wrong under present day conditions. Besides, the Navy is working too slowly. The Army and Air Force, for instance, sent in their quotas for the 3rd quarter of 1943 immediately after allocation, whereas the Navy failed to do so and has thus fallen behind.

The Chief, Naval Staff is very much inclined towards the view held by Speer, but does not want to decide before a meeting has been held with Speer and the Chiefs of Naval (Ship) Construction Division, Naval Ordnance Division and the Bureau of Naval Armament. Some objections to Speer's point of view have yet to be clarified.

IX. Considering urgent experimental tasks the Chief, Naval Staff finds that the Navy has been too economical in years past and lacked generosity in dealing with important questions of development: this policy is showing its drawbacks in many fields today.

Special Items:

I. On 27 May a meeting of the Divisional Chiefs of Naval Staff took place under the chairmanship of the Chief of Staff, Naval Staff. The question of alternative quarters in case of bomb damage was thoroughly discussed.

The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff informed the Divisional Chiefs of the reasons for the drop in submarine successes and the plan to increase the submarine and small ship program.

II. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Supply and Fuel Branch submits a memorandum on the fuel oil supply to the Italian Navy. The plan to raise the fuel oil stocks to 71,000 t is not possible because Rumania's own requirements have not been reduced in spite of all efforts, and the destruction of the Moene dam will result in a decrease in home production. The deliveries this month will amount to 56,000 t only. (Skl Qu A III 1704/43 Gkdos.)

III. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Organization and Mobilization Branch issues executive orders for the division of the Danube Flotilla into three independent units:

a. Danube Flotilla,
b. 30th Escort Flottila,
c. 30th Minesweeper Flotilla.

(1/Skl 14430/43 Gkdos.)

IV. The Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Ordnance Division, Underwater Obstacles Branch suggested the use of an anti-sweeping buoy (OMR). Naval Staff, Operations Division sees no essential advantages in the buoy without a charge and will no longer use this anti-sweeping device. (1/Skl I E 15314/43 Gkdos.)

V. The Chief of Radio Intercept Reports, Naval Staff, Naval Communications Division submits in No. 21/43 of the series of "Special Radio Intercept Reports" the results of radio monitoring and intelligence. Attention is drawn to the reorganization of the escort forces on the northern route (page 17) and the ferry flights across the Atlantic (page 19).

Situation 27 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo reports that the Etappe offices at Djakarta (Batavia) and Shonan (Singapore) started their duties on 17 and 22 May respectively. (1/Skl 15510/43 Gkdos.)

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Radio intelligence detected three vessels in the eastern North Atlantic.

Nineteen LCI's were supposed to go from Norfolk to Gibraltar via Bermuda on 24 May; 20 LCI's were about 500 miles southwest of the Azores on 26 May.

Air activity of the 19th Group over the Bay of Biscay was only slight.

Atlantic Coast:

Three ground mines were swept. During these operations one mine-exploding vessel was damaged.

Two of our own submarines report radar location on 132 cm. in the inner Bay of Biscay on 22 and 23 May, presumably by fishing smacks in the vicinity.

Channel Area:

Nothing to report.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Five mines were swept off the Frisian islands. The escort and patrol duties were carried out without special incident.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Five Russian submarines were off the Arctic coast, according to radio intelligence. Seven planes were operating over the North Sea. Reconnaissance planes were reported over Banak, Vardoe, Kirkenes and Haugesund.

Russian batteries fired on the fjord entrance to Petsamo on 25 May.

Own Situation:

The floating dock convoy for Narvik passed Korpewik on the afternoon of 27 May according to plan.

A supply dump which must have been there for quite some time was discovered on an island in the entrance to Kristiansund North.

Detonating charges (dry detonating charge) in bags and wooden cases were found on board an Italian steamer in Oslo. Norwegian workmen suspected of sabotage were apprehended.

Three Russian submarine lead-horned mines were cut south of Tromsoe.

Twenty ships were escorted north and 22 south.

Special Items.

1. The Naval Chief Command, Norway announces a new declared area in the Vest Fjord (see Telegram 1920).

2. Group North requested that the minelayer ROLAND be temporarily placed at the disposal of the Naval Chief Command, Norway to replace BRUMMER, as the reinforcement of the Westwall is to be carried out with the minelayers OSTMARK, ELSASS and BRUMMER. Naval Staff has agreed. The ROLAND will be placed at the disposal of the Naval Chief Command, Norway as soon as the KAISER returns to the Commander, Minelayers, Baltic. (1/Skl 15446/43 Gkdos.)

3. Naval Staff has given its consent to the Naval Chief Command, Norway for the proposed barrage operation NW "57" in the Malangenfjord (1/Skl I E 15445/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

On the forenoon of 27 May the battery Seiskari fired on the battery Bismarck and the command post Glinki without causing any damage. Slight guard ship traffic off Seiskari and Lavansaari.

2. Own Situation:

One tanker and three submarines were escorted within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. On this occasion one mine-exploding vessel struck a mine and was damaged north of Seeland.

The cruiser NUERNBERG put into Gdynia on 27 May.

Two ground mines were swept off Copenhagen. Explosions were observed north of Marienleuchte in the course of which one fishing smack sunk.

The work on the Korbetha barrage is being continued.

One boat of the coastal defense flotilla struck a mine and sank off Aegna on 27 May.

An oil track was attacked off Vaindlo on the evening of 26 May. Russian first aid gauze packages were picked up, and air-eddies were observed.

The escort duties were carried out without special incident.

V. Merchant Shipping.

The Chief, Naval Staff issued orders that each vessel of the merchant marine attached to the Navy is to be thoroughly examined so as to make shipping available for naval operations as well as for urgent transport tasks.

The Chief of the Shipping and Transport Branch, Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Rear Admiral Maehler, is being placed directly under the Commander in Chief, Navy for the execution of this task. (1/Skl 15373/43 geh. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XI.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

The U.S. Navy Department announces that tests with helicopters for operations against enemy submarines have been successfully completed. These planes can start from the deck of vessels and can also land there again. The Liberty ships are in future to be provided with a small deck to make the use of these planes possible.

2. Own Situation:

One of our boats sank the Swedish vessel SICILIA (1,633 BRT) off Lourenco Marques. As many as eleven vessels were observed off this port with

badly effected neutral markings. The boat assumed then to be camouflaged enemy vessels.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Of the 3rd Air Force 68 planes were operating over the western area and 8 over the Mediterranean. Enemy activity over the western area was brisk by day. Towards evening 15 Mosquitoes entered the Reich territory concentrating their attacks on Jena, where considerable damage to buildings was caused. The raid on the Diemel dam did not cause any damage. Strong enemy formations flew over during the night and carried out numerous harassing raids, the attacks were concentrated on Essen. Considerable damage to residential quarters in the city. Seventeen enemy planes were shot down by fighters, seven by anti-aircraft artillery.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

Several bombers attacked Bizerta on the night of 27 May. Bombs were dropped on the harbor and among the landing craft.

Italian planes torpedoed an enemy destroyer off the Egyptian coast and attacked railway installations near Marsa Matruh on the night of 25 May.

3. Eastern Front:

On 26 May 63 enemy planes were shot down, five of our own planes failed to return.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

A transport with troops aboard put into Gibraltar on the forenoon of 26 May.

Photographic reconnaissance revealed a large assembly of ships in Bone, an increase by 40 in the number of landing craft in Bizerta, the presence of 32 landing craft in Sousse, and the withdrawal of landingships from Alexandria. A convoy of 15 merchantmen, course west, was sighted northwest of Derna. Six vessels course northwest were off Appollonia.

Italian radio reconnaissance intercepted minesweepers engaged in operations off Philippeville. Heavy radio traffic between Great Britain and Algiers was intercepted.

Submarines have been reported off Olbia and La Spezia.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

PT boats could not be dispatched on operations as planned because of the weather. Nine auxiliary motor minesweepers entered Leghorn from La Spezia. The torpedoboat of foreign origin TA "9" put into Toulon for repairs in the dockyard.

The airfield of Villa Cidro was twice attacked on 27 May. Some of our own planes were damaged during an attack on another airfield. During the heavy air raids on Messina on 25 May the last operational ferry was sunk, so that railway ferry traffic across the Straits of Messina is no longer possible. The ferry service is being continued with small vessels.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The convoy traffic to the islands ran without special incident.

An anti-aircraft artillery corvette was for the first time employed as convoy escort.

Special Items.

1. The Deputy for German Sea Transportation in the Mediterranean has replied to the inquiry of the Quartermaster General, Armed Forces, High Command, Operations Staff concerning the delay in transfer of the ships assigned to the Aegean Sea (see War Diary, Part A, 25 May) explaining that the transfer had been postponed until the moon-lit nights were over. In the meantime the ships have been used for supply runs to the Italian islands.

The Deputy for German Sea Transportation in the Mediterranean furthermore reports the degree of operational readiness of individual ships, pointing out that the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South refuses any further transfer of ships from the western to the eastern Mediterranean, and has requested the Armed Forces Operations Staff for a decision on the highest level. (See Telegram 0240.)

2. At the express wish of the German Naval Command, Italy, who wanted to commit the ships as soon as they became operational, the Naval Staff rejected the request of Group West to lay minefields off the south coast of France using the minelayers POMMERN and BRANDENBURG. The German Naval Command, Italy now requests, in view of the minelayers' urgent need of training, the laying of an activated minefield prior to carrying out the tasks in the Italian area. In this way the ships are available to Group West for the proposed minelaying tasks. Naval Staff gives its consent and issues instructions for the best possible escort to be held in readiness. (1/Skl I E 15381/43 Gkdos.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The special operation "DRACHE" commenced on 27 May. The convoy traffic ran without special incident.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance detected only slight shipping off the Caucasian coast on 27 May. An air raid on Anapa on 27 May caused only slight damage.

Own Situation:

At noon on 27 May an Anapa transport off the coast of southern Taman was attacked with bombs and gunfire from planes. One naval landing craft has sunk. One Italian PT boat in Feodosiya Bay was attacked from the air.

The cession of the Italian PT boats to Germany by the Italians took place on 20 May. The Italian PT boats have been grouped together as the 11th PT Boat Flotilla bearing the numbers 501 to 508. The PT boat S "507" struck a

wreck in the harbor of Feodosiya resulting in extensive damage below the water-line.

Operations by the 1st PT Boat Flotilla off Tuapse on the night of 27 May had to be cancelled because of the weather.

The steamer CHARKOW is still aground off Sevastopol and lightering continues. A tank lighter has stranded off the harbor entrance to Yalta.

Four armed fishing vessels have so far been commissioned by the 23rd Submarine Chaser Flotilla.

The Danube has been closed to traffic between Galatz and Sulina because of suspected mines. The ferry traffic ran to schedule.

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Items of Political Importance.

The U.S. Navy Department announces the large-scale production of two new types of small naval vessels which are to be used especially for combatting submarines. One of them is said to be of steel and 60 meters in length, the other of wood and 45 meters in length.

The French battleship RICHELIEU is to be recommissioned in a few weeks according to the U.S. Office of War Information.

There is nothing but conjecture with regard to the results of the discussions between Roosevelt and Churchill, as obviously nothing essential has become known. The conjectures speak of invasions of Europe, above all in the Balkans. The most important feature is supposed to have been the problem of shipping space.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff reports on the operational readiness of the ships. The LUETZOW is operational for European Waters. The weak point is her electric engines, which will require a long time for conversion once they are due for replacement. Such a replacement is being prepared but is postponed for the time being.

The PRINZ EUGEN is ready for smaller operations. Six weeks are required for an engine overhaul in order to render the cruiser fully operational. The TIRPITZ is scheduled for a dockyard period in the fall. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff emphasizes that this plan must be kept specially secret. The operational readiness of the training unit as regards personnel is dependent on the progress made in the training of the warrant officers taken aboard each time.

In order to bring about at a faster rate of operational readiness in case of need, it would be necessary to assign additional trained personnel and specialists to the ship.

Special Items.

The Bureau of Naval Armament, Naval Ordnance Division, Artillery Branch has submitted a treatise on the results so far achieved in the development of the thermal-location and infra-red radar gear. It can be seen therefrom that it is necessary for both types of location to be applied quite separately from each other, even if they merge physically. The thermal gear is greatly dependent

on the weather, especially on the normal visibility range, whereas the infra-red gear gives better results as regards range but is, on the other hand, more easily detected. (1/Skl III a 15587/43 Gkdos.)

Situation 28 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo requested supplies for ship "28". This request was answered in Radiogram 1813 direct to the ship as follows:

"1. Shipment of supplies from home waters in required quantities impossible in summer 1943, uncertain in winter 1943/44; shipment of vital goods in small quantities possible by Italian boats. The question of torpedoes for light PT boat is being investigated.

2. You will submit request for supplies, reduced in accordance with paragraph "1" after taking on supplies from the OSORNO and the ALSTERUFER.

3. The ALSTERUFER carries no spare parts for the light PT boat."

The German Liaison Officer attached to the Italian Commander, Submarines in Bordeaux has been informed that Naval Staff regards the Japanese demand that the AQUILA boats sail only the surface from 70° E on as going too far. The boats are to remain unnoticed in the Indian Ocean at all costs and are not to proceed on the surface until they have come within 400 miles of Japanese territorial waters. (1/Skl I k 14384/43 Gkdos.)

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Four enemy vessels were located in the eastern North Atlantic. There were 42 planes operating off the Bay of Biscay.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast:

Three ground mines were swept off the Atlantic Coast.

Channel Area:

The 2nd, 4th and 6th PT Boat Flotillas carried out mine fouling operations off the south coast of England on the night of 28 May. The 5th PT Boat Flotilla had to break off operations, as it had already been forced to withdraw by night fighters on the outward passage. The enemy launched destroyers and motor gunboats against the PT boats. No engagement took place.

Several small vessels were sighted west of Cherbourg, and enemy forces were located off Sark and Guernsey.

North of Gravelines the 8th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and a group of the 36th Minesweeper Flotilla entered into a fierce engagement with British PT boats. One of our minesweepers and one buoy layer were damaged. One enemy PT boat was set on fire and another one sunk, according to reports received so far.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Five mines were swept off the Frisian islands.

The defense positions off Hook and Ijmuiden reported enemy PT boats; there was no engagement.

The convoy traffic within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North ran without special incident.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Radio intelligence intercepted six planes over the North Sea and six in the Iceland area.

One unsuccessful attack on our convoy was carried out with aerial torpedoes off Feiestein and another of Lister on 27 May.

On 25 May Russian batteries on the Ribachi peninsula shelled the fjord entrance to Petsamo. Reports of damage have not been received.

Own Situation:

The Narvik floating dock convoy passed Bergen northbound early on 28 May.

One naval landing craft ran aground off Harstad owing to damage to its rudder and was beached.

Twenty three vessels were escorted north and 28 south.

Special Items.

Group North requested the allocation of TMC's and TMB's for submarine mine-laying tasks in the northern area; Naval Staff complies with the request of the Group and asks for a report on operational areas and plans for execution. (1/Skl I E 15447/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

There was brisk aerial activity over Hochland and Tyters Island on the night of 27 May.

2. Own Situation:

Within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic 1 tanker, 1 steamer, and 3 submarines were escorted, 8 boats and 1 mine-sweeping plane were dispatched to sweep the channels.

The German steamer TRITON (1,620 BRT) ran aground south of Goeteborg on the night of 25 May.

The various places in the Gulf of Finland where submarines dived were once more attacked with depth charges. There was evidence of oil and air bubbles coming to the surface.

It can be assumed for certain that four Russian submarines were destroyed. One submarine which had been reported by air reconnaissance northwest of Schepel on 24 May, may possibly have broken through.

The submarine patrol behind the "Seeigel" and "Nashorn" barrages was carried out as planned.

The 1st Motor Minesweeper Flotilla continued the 100 per cent clear sweep of the "Korbetha" barrage without locating any mines. Minesweeping operations were carried out off Windau and at the barrage "Warthburg 2".

Anti-submarine warning was given in Danzig Bay on the morning of 28 May. One of our own boats manned with experienced officers reports having sighted a

thick periscope and located an electric engine by hydrophone. Shipping has not been stopped but is running close inshore.

The transport traffic to Finland ran without special incident.

V. Merchant Shipping.

The Foreign Office has sent a report from the German Legation at Lisbon regarding the sale of German steamers in Lobito, Lourenco Marques and Beira to the Portuguese. The German crews are to be brought back to Europe aboard Portuguese steamers. (1/Skl 15966/43 geh.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

One boat sank one tanker and two freighters totalling 24,000 BRT out of a convoy off Cape Agulhas. The air and naval escort were inexperienced, according to a report from the boat. On the other hand, another boat east of Durban was forced to withdraw from a convoy by the air escort.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Of the 3rd Air Force, 78 planes were operating in the western area, and nine in the Mediterranean.

Daylight missions over the western area were of medium strength. One Spitfire was shot down during an attack on Zeebrugge. In the course of the night the enemy flew over the Heligoland Bight, presumably to plant mines.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

One tanker and several landing craft were hit in the course of an attack on Bizerta in the evening of 27 May.

In the morning of 28 May an attack was launched against Sousse, during which one landing craft transport was severely hit and other vessels damaged. According to photographic reconnaissance 32 landing craft of various sizes were lying in the harbor.

Eight enemy planes were shot down during air raids on Italian towns and villages.

3. Eastern Front:

On 27 May 53 enemy planes were shot down, 12 of our own planes failed to return.

Special Items.

The Commander in Chief, Air, Air Force Operations Staff announces that the helicopter FA "223" will make an operational test flight in areas less menaced from the air, acting as close anti-submarine escort. (1/Skl 15640/43 Gkdos.)

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

A small convoy left Gibraltar in the direction of the Atlantic on the night of 27 May.

The FORMIDABLE put out for the Mediterranean at noon. There were no essential changes in the number and type of ships present in the harbor of Gibraltar. A convoy of 15 freighters, one tanker and nine escort vessels put in from the Mediterranean towards evening.

Shipping was brisk in the Philippeville and Cape Bon area:
in the morning, 14 vessels off Tabarca, course southwest;
in the afternoon, 6 large vessels, 25 small ones, 5 destroyers off Cape Bon, course east;
in the evening, about 20 merchantmen, 26 presumably landing craft, 6 destroyers southwest of Pantelleria, course south.

Our bombers which had been detailed to operate were forced to withdraw by 70 Spitfires. Nine vessels, 15 landing craft and 3 PT boats off Bizerta. No sightings on the coast between Sollum and Alexandria.

Enemy submarines were reported sighted:

on 27 May east of Cape Ferro,
on 28 May south of Marsalla,
north of Bastia,
south of Toulon,
east of Toulon and
east of Palermo.

Air reconnaissance was without results in the area southeast of Crete.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Three Italian submarines were in the operational area.

At noon on 28 May a distress report of an air attack was received from the sea area northwest of Mallorca. The report did not bear any signature, so that it is not quite clear which boat is involved; it may be the U "755". The boat made no further report, although it was requested to do so. Spanish destroyers put out on the evening of 28 May to render assistance.

The submarine which was to operate off Gibraltar had its periscope damaged in an air attack and was compelled to start on its return passage.

Six boats of the 7th PT Boat Flotilla and five boats of the 3rd PT Boat Flotilla put out for the Straits of Sicily on the evening of 28 May, but were forced to break off the operation because of the weather.

Nine auxiliary motor minesweepers are en route from La Spezia to Bastia.

At noon on 28 May a severe air raid on the town and harbor of Leghorn took place, where serious damage was inflicted. Two medium-sized steamers and 4 small ones have been sunk, 2 torpedo boats and 1 corvette grounded, 1 destroyer in dock damaged, 1 auxiliary vessel is on fire, billets and offices of the Chief, Supply and Transport together with communication facilities have been destroyed.

Further air raids were directed against the airfields of Foggia, Trapani, Castel Vetrano, and Chinisia. Sixteen of our own planes were destroyed on the ground and several damaged. The raids on Castel Vetrano and Chinisia were repeated in the evening. Damage has not yet been reported. Late in the afternoon an attack on Marsala took place. Damage has likewise not yet been reported.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The supply services to the islands ran without special incident.

Special Items.

I. Group West reported that on the south coast of France Nice is unsuitable

as a base for PT boats for navigational reasons and lack of harbor facilities. The 3rd and 7th PT Boat Flotillas are, for the time being, to be divided between Toulon and Marseilles and will later have their main base at Marseilles when the Rhone tunnel has been converted to serve as a protected anchorage and maintenance and repair works. (Telegram 1825.)

II. The German Naval Command, Italy has submitted an action report on the sinking of the captured PT boat "RA 10" during a rescue operation off La Goulette on 30 Apr. (1/Skl 15736/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Some enemy reconnaissance planes flew over the islands in the Aegean Sea. One sailing vessel was set on fire, another one was sunk.

Own Situation:

The minelayer DRACHE and BARLETTA carried out their minelaying task "G 48" as planned.

The escort duties in the Aegean Sea were carried out without special incident.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance detected only slight traffic on the Caucasian coast. One submarine was reported off Tuapse and one off Yalta.

Own Situation:

Southwest of Taganrog coastal patrol boats had an engagement on the night of 26 May without any particular damage or successes resulting.

One of our convoys was unsuccessfully bombed off Cape Chauda on 27 May. PT boat operations off Tuapse planned for the night of 28 May are not possible because of the weather.

The steamer CHARKOW came afloat off Sevastopol on 28 May and has put into port.

The ferry service ran to schedule.

One Rumanian passenger steamer was damaged in the stern by an explosion in the Danube estuary on 25 May. The vessel has been beached. On 28 May another steamer sunk after an explosion. An investigation as to whether the explosions

were caused by mines or acts of sabotage is in progress. As a result the Danube between Galatz and Sulina has been closed to shipping.

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

The Portuguese Premier Salazar is said to have stated there is, at present, no prospect of a successful mediation by the neutral powers in favor of peace. The recent initiative taken by Spain which met with such a pronounced refusal had forestalled, for the time being, all similar attempts by other neutrals, including the Vatican. Salazar regards as past any danger which might have threatened Spain and Portugal from Great Britain and the U.S.A., as the Allies would avoid drawing upon themselves the odium of such a breach of neutrality.

The "News Chronicle" announces that one of the most extensive fleet operations, which is closely connected with the landing and supply of allied armies on the European continent, is imminent.

On the subject of the discussions in Washington "The Times" states that Japan will soon be made to feel the weight of Anglo-American strategic operations. At the same time, the assault on the European Fortress would commence. The operations of the Allies would, last but not least, also be favored by their improved position in the submarine war.

De Gaulle is expected to arrive at Algiers on 30 May for discussions with Giraud.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. Group West reported that in France an air defense for the French interior is in the course of preparation comprising anti-aircraft artillery and air raid precaution organizations, and will be under direct orders of the Vichy Government.

II. The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division, Naval Staff reports that the total exemption hitherto existing for workmen in naval ordnance plants has been altered, and now applies only to workmen engaged on armament manufacture. The assessment concerning the output and the workmen required for same is incumbent upon the armament committees, which, being in the interior, cannot visualize the naval requirements adequately. The danger exists that this measure may cause well trained and still young workmen to be called up for military service, which may result in a considerable reverse to the armament output. The Chief, Naval Ordnance Division suggests that at least those Navy plants be totally exempt from the call-up of workmen which cannot be defined as special and for which only the Commander in Chief, Navy is responsible.

The Chief, Naval Staff demands that the term "menace to production" be accurately defined. Minister Speer must have definite reasons for alteration of regulations concerning exemption from military service which are not known here at present. The Chief, Naval Staff proposes to discuss this question in the

next few days with Minister Speer who, after all, would be the one to suffer since his armament program would be endangered by this measure.

III. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that it may be possible for the enemy to gain about 1,700,000 BRT of shipping by opening up the Mediterranean Sea route. No through-transport passing from west to east has, however, been observed so far.

Conference in a Highly Restricted Circle:

IV. In a letter Admiral Bertoldi has stated that the Italian Navy is willing to make two submarines available for transport purposes and requests two type "IX C" boats in exchange.

The Chief, Naval Staff declares himself against a transfer of "IX C" boats to the Mediterranean, as they would be more endangered there than smaller vessels. The Commander, Submarines has not transferred any "IX C" boats to the Mediterranean so far for this reason: The Chief, Naval Staff would agree to the exchange if the Italians operated the "IX C" boats in the Atlantic.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division has submitted a report on the cruising performances of British warships, among which the high cruising performances of the destroyers, which amount to an average of about 5,000 miles monthly, must be particularly emphasized. (1/Skl 16075/43 geh. in War Diary, Supplement "Material on the Enemy (Situation".)

II. Naval Staff, Bureau of Naval Armament was made an investigation into the German aluminium supply situation, which is almost completely dependent on the import of bauxite from abroad. The bauxite is, to a very large extent, supplied from the Balkans and is very greatly dependent on sea transport, as the rail transport in the Balkans is inadequate. (1/Skl 15835/43 geh.)

Situation 29 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Ship "28" was given the following instructions for her passage to the operational area:

"Naval Staff considers a short appearance in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean desirable and assumes that there are no objections on the part of the Japanese; operations in the Pacific Ocean are likewise permissible while the

auxiliary cruiser is en route to the operational area, but they must not give away the direction of its passage."

Situation West Area:

1. Enemy Situation:

Our air reconnaissance sighted one merchantman and two destroyers 120 miles northwest of the Hebrides, course west.

Photographic reconnaissance over ports of southern England revealed the following:

In Portsmouth: 3 cruisers, 1 monitor, 8 destroyers, 4 submarines, 8 minesweepers, 73 landing craft, 1 passenger steamer, 7 freighters, and numerous smaller craft;

in Southampton: 1 landing craft transport, 4 destroyers, 4 destroyers on shipways, 7 escort vessels, 130 landing craft, 8 merchantmen and some smaller vessels;

in Great Yarmouth: 16 landing craft and 8 smaller vessels. Thirty-six planes were detected operating over the Bay of Biscay.

Radio intelligence located one British vessel 270 miles southwest of St. Vincent, one 175 miles southeast of Reykjanaes, and one 220 miles northwest of Porcupine Bank.

2. Own Situation:

Atlantic Coast Area:

Two mines were swept off the Atlantic Coast.

A heavy raid on St. Nazaire took place in the afternoon. Serious damage has not been reported so far. The locks remained undamaged. Three enemy planes were shot down by naval anti-aircraft artillery.

A small tanker sank during an attack on La Pallice.

Channel Area:

The 4th and 6th PT Boat Flotillas transferred to Cherbourg. Five boats of the 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla put out from St. Malo on the evening of 29 May in order to attack enemy forces which were operating against one of our dummy convoys there. No reports on results have been received.

The reports on the minelaying operations by the PT boats on the night of 27 May have been supplemented to the effect that west of Portland Bill the 2nd PT Boat Flotilla was straddled by well-aimed shells, presumably fired from shore batteries, and forced to withdraw southwards. The minelaying operation was carried out. On their return passage the ships were attacked by night fighters and bombs fell close to their marks. The 5th PT Boat Flotilla was continuously attacked by night fighter-bombers while still on the outward passage and exchanged salvoes with motor gunboats. The grid squares ordered to be mined were not reached. On account of fog the ships started on their return passage. The brief reports of the 4th and 6th PT Boat Flotillas have not yet been received because of a break-down in communications.

The 8th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and the 36th Minesweeper Flotilla report that their engagement with enemy PT boats north of Gravelines took place at very close range and that five prisoners were picked up out of the sea. The 8th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla sank two PT boats and seriously damaged and set on fire two others. The 36th Minesweeper Flotilla repulsed attempts to board the boats with hand grenades and sank one PT boat; a second PT boat in sinking condition disappeared from sight.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Nine mines were swept off the Frisian Islands. One minesweeper group was attacked by Spitfires south of Den Helder. No damage. The escort duties within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, North were carried out without any particular incidents.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

Two Russian destroyers and two British minesweepers were detected between Svatoi Noss and Archangel. Five Russian submarines were operating off the Norwegian Arctic coast. Five planes of the Iceland squadrons were operating; eight planes were operating over the North Sea.

Russian batteries fired a few salvos on a cutter in the entrance to Petsamo on 27 May.

Enemy planes were reported over Gamvik and Stavanger. An unsuccessful torpedo attack on a steamer southeast of Kristiansand South took place on the evening of 28 May.

2. Own Situation:

Another Russian submarine lead-horned mine was cut in the Kvaenangen Fjord.

The floating dock convoy for Narvik passed Stadlandet on 28 May northbound. Twenty-nine steamers were escorted north and 15 south.

Special Items.

1. The Chief, Hydrographic and Meteorological Division once more requested that a BV 222 be placed at his disposal following the appearance of enemy planes at the weather station "Holzauge" on Greenland. Naval Staff again investigated the situation without finding reasons to justify the commitment of a BV 222 as the only way to achieve this objective. The Chief, Hydrographic and Meteorological Division has been ordered to organize a Do 26 in cooperation with the Air Force, presumably for several flights. (1/Skl 15547/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II a.)

2. In a detailed review the Naval Chief Command, Norway informs the 5th Air Force, the Commanding General, Armed Forces, Norway, and the XX Mountain Army Chief Command of the effects that will be felt within the command of the 5th Air Force as a result of the severe restrictions in the supply of aviation gasoline. Repercussions to be expected from the lack of convoy escort and reconnaissance have been particularly emphasized. (1/Skl 15481/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Only slight shipping was observed in Kronstadt Bay.

2. Own Situation:

Six steamers and two submarines were escorted within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Thriteen vessels were assigned to sweep the channels. The hospital ship BERLIN carrying 440 patients aboard left Oslo for Aarhus on 30 May.

The Swedish steamer GONDUL (1,342 BRT) struck a mine and sank west of Arendsee on the night of 28 May.

The anti-submarine patrol in Danzig Bay was without result.

The minesweeping operations off Windau and at the barrage "Warthburg II" had to be broken off because of the weather. The 100 per cent clear sweep of the barrage "Korbetha III" has been completed.

Three mine explosions were reported south of Hochland. An investigation has not yet been possible because of the weather.

The anti-submarine patrol behind the net barrages in the Gulf of Finland was restricted because of the weather.

Special Items.

Naval Staff approves the plans of Naval Station Baltic for the reinforcement of the "Nashorn" barrages. The mines will, for the time being, have to be drawn from the operational reserves of Naval Station Baltic. The attention of Station Baltic is drawn to the danger to our own forces from ground mines and the possibility of magnetic effects when the net is let out beyond a certain distance. (1/Skl 1566/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

V. Merchant Shipping.

1. The Reich Minister for Food and Agriculture announced that fishing off the Danish west coast has been suspended because Danish fishing vessels have been shelled. This will cause a very undesirable reduction in the fish supply to Germany, particularly in view of the cut in the meat ration. The Navy is requested to make every possible allowance for the Danish fishing fleet. A deputy of the Food Ministry has been confidentially informed by word of mouth that offensive action has been suspended until further notice. Fishing was resumed on 26 May. (1/Skl 15933/43 geh.)

2. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submits No. 8/43 of the series "Brief Reports on Foreign Merchant Shipping". Attention is drawn to the attempt at equipping merchantmen with PT boats for submarine pursuit. (1/Skl 16218/43 geh.)

In a separate report Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division investigated the supply movements from the U.S. A. to the Suez Canal zone in the period from January to April 1943. As compared with the preceding three months the supply movements have decreased somewhat but they are about twice as heavy as the British traffic on the same route. (1/Skl 15631/43 Gkdos.)

3. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Shipping and Transport Branch submits the current survey of sea transport carried out by the Navy in March 1943. (1/Skl 16517/43 geh.)

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

Nothing to report.

2. Own Situation:

In the area of Group "Trutz" a west-east convoy is expected between 1 and 6 June. It is not proposed to operate assault landing craft against the eastbound convoy which is expected to pass through the area of the group after 1 June.

One boat attacked a westbound convoy and torpedoed three tankers and two freighters totalling 35,000 BRT 150 miles northwest of Natal. Because of the counter-defense it was not possible to observe the sinking, which, however, may be assumed to have taken place. In the course of the attack the boat clearly noticed destroyer location without being detected by the naval escort. Air patrol was active all day following the attack.

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

On the night of 29 May 36 planes of the 3rd Air Force fouled the convoy channels between Lowestoft and the Thames Estuary.

Numerous daylight missions were flown over the west area with attacks on various airfields without any essential damage being inflicted. A raid on Rennes caused damage of medium extent.

During this attack fighters shot down 17 enemy planes, the anti-aircraft artillery 11 planes (3 of them by naval anti-aircraft artillery).

During the night a raid on the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial district took place, the attack concentrating on Wuppertal where severe damage to houses resulted. Night fighters shot down 20 planes, anti-aircraft artillery five planes.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

In the course of the attacks on the afternoon of 28 May bombs were dropped on enemy forces without results.

South of Athens four enemy planes attacked one of our Junkers formations. One Ju and two of the escorting Arados "196" were shot down.

3. Eastern Front:

Planes fouled the Volga River on the night of 28 May. Ten boats were destroyed in the sea of Asov.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The minelayer MANXMAN left the dock in Gibraltar on 28 May. The FORMIDABLE with five destroyers again put into port. The battleships HOWE, KING GEORGE V and the aircraft carrier INVINCIBLE - now identified by name - are lying in Gibraltar. The whereabouts of the NELSON is not known at present.

A group of five LST's and 13 LCI's again passed the Gibraltar Straits from the Atlantic.

Air reconnaissance reports the following:

Northeast of Arzeu 9 warships, including 1 heavy vessel, course east;
8 merchantmen and 6 patrol boats about to enter Arzeu;
west of Pantelleria several warships, including 2 cruisers;
northeast of Cape Bon 11 merchantmen, 1 small cruiser or destroyer,
north of Cape Bon 10 PT boats, course west;
off Bizerta 2 vessels, course east;
in the harbor of Sousse 5 freighters, 30 LCT's, 11 LCI's, 15 to 20 of what looked like assault landing craft.

A westbound enemy convoy was between Derna and Benghazi, according to radio intelligence.

Two enemy submarines have been reported off the southwestern tip of Sicily.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

The Spanish destroyer CHURRUCA which was dispatched on rescue operations has so far saved nine men of the crew of the submarine U "755". The search is being continued.

The torpedo boat of foreign origin JA "10" is en route from Spezia to St. Stefano. The aviso SG "14" and the anti-aircraft corvette SG "13" are heading for the same port.

Nine auxiliary motor minesweepers are en route from Bastia to Porto Veccio.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The supply traffic to the islands was without special incident.

Special Items.

1. An agent (Ostrow) reports on the anticipated use of enemy shipping which is being made available by using the Mediterranean route. The following conclusions may be drawn from conversations he had with ship's transport personnel:

a. complete suspension of the Cape route in favor of the Mediterranean passage is unlikely, as shipping via the Mediterranean seems to be safe only if considerable naval and air forces are employed;

b. a considerable portion of the shipping becoming available will be used for sending additional supplies to Great Britain, as Great Britain is said to have been living on her reserves since the autumn of 1942. This would mean that there are no plans for a large-scale invasion, but that only the establishment by force of bridgeheads may be expected, designed to tie down axis forces;

c. the time for the offensive against the Aegean area is considered favorable, but calls for an extensive use of light naval forces, the availability of which is not absolutely certain.

2. In the weekly report on the situation in the Mediterranean compiled by Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division the final conclusion drawn therein is emphasized; it points out that transport movements going on at present speak against an imminent large-scale landing. The shifting of landing craft to the Tunis ports is possibly in preparation for a minor operation against Pantelleria and Lampedusa.

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The minelayer MOROSINI put into Piraeus following the execution of a minelaying task. The minelayers DRACHE and BARLETTA with escort put into Salonica to load mines. The convoy traffic in the Aegean Sea ran to schedule.

Special Items.

1. Naval Staff informs Group South of details on how to convert the Spanish ships in the Aegean Sea into German vessels. Special importance is attached to the vessels not being identifiable as former Spanish ships. (See Telegram 1712.)

2. With regard to the improvement of the artillery defense of the extended Greek and Black Sea coasts Group South reports that a motorized coastal artillery offers considerable advantages over stationary batteries, which is particularly important for the prevention of the establishment of concentrated forces at places which are not properly protected. Group South requests information with regard to what extent the employment of motorized batteries may be expected. (See Telegram 1230.)

3. Naval Staff requests Group South and the German Naval Command, Italy to extend the barrage planning on the west coast of the Balkans to include the sea area of Corfu and to report the plans. (1/Skl I E 15582/43 Gkdos.)

4. According to data supplied from Turkish quarters, the Soviets made the following demands to Great Britain and the U.S.A. with regard to proposed operations in the Balkans:

1. All landing operations on the Bulgarian and Rumanian coasts are to be placed under the Russian chief command.

2. In the occupation of the Balkan countries only those political measures are to be taken which are acceptable to the Soviet Government. The Turkish Government is said to have been informed, and assured that these conditions are not directed against Turkish interests. (1/Skl 16220/43 geh.)

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance observed one submarine 30 miles southwest of Yalta. Our reconnaissance planes report one large enemy vessel 25 miles southwest of Sevastopol and three boats off Novorossisk at high speed, course northwest.

Own Situation:

The 1st PT Boat Flotilla left for the operational area northwest of Tuapse on the evening of 26 May.

Channel patrol on the southern coast of the Crimea was without result. The motor minesweepers carrying out this task were unsuccessfully bombed off Feodosiya.

One enemy submarine unsuccessfully attacked a small convoy southwest of Yalta.

Two remote-controlled mines were swept south of the Kerch Strait.

Two minesweeping planes have been dispatched to patrol the Danube between Galatz and Sulina.

One submarine in the operational area had to withdraw towards the southeast because of a depth charge pursuit.

The ferry service ran without special incident.

IX. Situation East Asia.

1. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff held a conference on 25 May with the Japanese Vice Admiral Abe and the Japanese Naval Attaché, Rear Admiral Yokoi. The discussion centered particularly on the new situation in the Mediterranean following the fall of Tunis and on the reasons for the decreasing submarine successes. For details see 1/Skl I opa. 1547/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XV.

2. The Japanese liaison officer submitted a lengthy report on Japanese experiences with the fighting methods of the U.S. Air Force. It is to be particularly noted that the Americans do not fight very bravely unless they feel superior to the enemy both in number and equipment. The fighting strength of the Air Force, which rests on very large productive capacity, is not to be underestimated. War experiences made by the U.S. Air Force are quickly and thoroughly evaluated and applied at the next opportunity.

Open combat is, however, avoided as much as possible unless positive success can be anticipated. The attacks of the enemy Air Force are, in the main, directed against our supply services. (1/Skl 15471/43 Gkdos.)

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Items of Political Importance.

Nothing to report.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Fleet Branch, Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division submits a resumé of the small shipping available in the Mediterranean, which does not include the barges supplied by the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping.

Concerning the readiness of the barges it is reported that bracings and bulkheads will have to be installed in order to make these vessels seaworthy. The installation will be carried out in Marseilles.

It is proposed to fix anti-torpedo nets in the valley-dams only in places where they will be of use. At present the nets are in transit to the various valley-dams, and will be withdrawn from those places where they are not needed. According to a report from Rear-Admiral Voss a cancellation of the order for the use of anti-torpedo nets at Fuehrer Headquarters was no longer possible. This matter will shortly be settled at Fuehrer Headquarters.

The construction of the six new shipways for naval landing craft in the Italian area will not be completed for some time as the search for suitable places has only just been concluded.

II. The Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff reports that a suggestion for the exchange of wounded soldiers and interned civilians between the belligerents has been worked out in detail by Switzerland. In this connection the exchange of crews of merchantmen has been rejected by Great Britain. Naval Staff is likewise not interested in furnishing the enemy with merchant crews, but our own great lack of them weighs against this. An attempt will be made to bring about an exchange of merchant crews just the same. Such a demand, however, must not be permitted to let the entire undertaking break down. Naval Staff will give its views on the matter to the German Foreign Office.

III. The Chief, Operations Division, Naval Staff suggests that aerial mines with the new firing device be used off Port Said and Alexandria. The Chief, Naval Staff will mention this suggestion at Fuehrer Headquarters.

IV. The Chief, Naval Communications Division reports that the plan to obtain radar receiving sets for submarines from the Post Office authorities cannot be carried out, as the Post Office has only a few sets on which tests have not yet been fully completed.

In the western area a radar experimental squad has been set up for the operation of which Group West will be responsible. The Group originally refused to do this. The Chief, Naval Staff confirms the subordination of the radar experimental squad to Group West.

The Chief, Naval Communications Division, Naval Staff reports that at present experiments are being made to produce an acoustic anti-aircraft alarm system for submarines so as to eliminate the element of surprise by enemy planes during the night and unfavorable weather. It has not yet been definitely established whether this system will be successful.

Special Items.

I. The Deputy of the Commander in Chief, Navy for War Economy, Armament and Research reports the following as the result of various conferences between the Commander in Chief, Navy and the Naval Deputy for War Economy, Armament and Research respectively, and Minister Speer on an increase in the steel quota for the Navy.

1. An increase in the steel quota for the Navy in the third three-month period of 1943 is not possible. The quotas allotted to the various departments in the letter of 21 May will remain unchanged. The negotiations on metal quotas have not yet been concluded.

2. In agreement with Reich Minister Speer the Commander in Chief, Navy has decreed that the warship construction plan be, nevertheless, carried out on the same scale as ordered by him. The departments concerned must allot their quotas in such a way as to guarantee the start of the enlarged warship construction plan in its entirety by the allocation of the initial requirements, and in addition to fulfill the tasks with military priority as well as possible.

The Commander in Chief, Navy has made it particularly clear to the chiefs of the various departments that in view of the remaining gap between the requirements and the actual allocations, the most expedient and economical use of the quotas be ensured under all circumstances and very strictly supervised. In this connection special attention is directed to specific points. (1/Skl 16442/43 geh.)

II. The Armed Forces, Operations Staff has compiled an enemy situation report, excluding the eastern front, for the middle of May. The over-all situation is mainly characterized by the Anglo-American concentration of all available forces towards the taking of the Tunisian bridgehead, furthermore by the ever increasing preparations in Great Britain and the western Mediterranean for landing operations.

In view of the available shipping and forces, landing operations, which will probably be directed against the Italian islands, may be expected shortly. (Also see War Diary, Part A, 23 May 1943) (1/Skl 14703/43 Gkdos. in the Appendix "Enemy Situation Reports".)

III. The Army General Staff, Intelligence Division, West submits No. 11/43 of the series "Enemy Situation Reports". (This report is not included in the Armed Forces, Operations Staff's review mentioned under II.) The conclusion reached is that the next major enemy operations are to be expected about the middle of June in the western Mediterranean against Sardinia and Corsica and in the eastern Mediterranean against the Peloponnese, with the main concentration in the eastern Mediterranean theater. (3/Skl FL 2007/43 Gkdos.)

IV. A reputably reliable agent reports that preparations for an invasion are being made in the Netherlands.

This piece of news does not sound very probable in spite of specific details (1/Skl 16266/43 geh. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. II b),

V. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submits Nr. 8/43 of the series "Brief Reports on the Enemy Situation". (1/Skl 16438/43 geh. in War Diary, Appendix "Material on the Enemy Situation".)

Situation 30 May 1943.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo has been advised that the Naval Staff approves the appointment of Captain von Ruckteschell as Chief of the Etappe in the southern Japanese area.

The Naval Attaché, Tokyo has been informed that, contrary to the Japanese suggestion, the Italian submarines have orders to remain unobserved in the Indian Ocean and consequently not to proceed on the surface until within about 400 miles of the coast. (Telegram 1406.)

All vessels in foreign waters have been informed concerning newly detected enemy command posts in the Australia - New-Zealand area, and the intention to equip U.S. merchantmen with PT boats to combat submarines. (Telegram 0956.)

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Our air reconnaissance sighted two groups of steamers west of Cape St. Vincent. For details of engagement see Aerial Situation.

Thirty-five enemy planes were operating over the Bay of Biscay.

Four British vessels were located in the eastern Atlantic.

2. Own Situation:

Area Atlantic Coast:

Three ground mines were swept off St. Nazaire and the Gironde Estuary.

Two minesweepers were seriously damaged by ramming.

The power supply to the dockyard was partly cut off as a result of the air raid on La Pallice on 29 May. Fountain pens filled with explosives were found to have been dropped.

Channel Area:

The 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla sailed via St. Malo to Cherbourg following an unsuccessful operation on the night of 28 May.

The 2nd and 5th PT Boat Flotillas carried out a mining operation in the western part of the channel. Reports on details have not been received.

A French fishing cutter manned with a German control crew secured a British PT boat off Gravelines; it had apparently been severely damaged in the course of the engagement on the night of 28 May. No details have been received.

Special Items.

Group West reports that the Commander, PT Boats is interested in the reports on British airplane successes in combats with our own PT boats not being refuted, as otherwise yet more effectual methods against our PT boats might have to be expected. (Telegram 2200.)

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

Enemy Situation:

One harbor defense vessel off Flushing was damaged by gun fire from

two Hurricanes.

Enemy PT boats were detected operating off Ijmuiden on the night of 30 May; no engagement took place.

Own Situation:

The second section of the barrage "Stemmbogen" has been laid.

Three ground mines were swept off the Frisian Islands.

The escort duties within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Northern Defenses were carried out without special incident.

2. Norway:

Enemy Situation:

Air reconnaissance north of Iceland, Jan Mayen was without result. The photographic reconnaissance scheduled for Scapa had to be broken off because of the weather.

One merchantman and two destroyers course west were sighted 150 miles southwest of the Faeroes.

Six planes were operating over the North Sea and two over the Iceland area according to radio intelligence. Enemy planes were reported over Egersund and Stadlandet.

Own Situation:

Kwaenanger Fjord was reopened to shipping on 30 May.

The floating dock convoy passed Kristiansand North on 30 May.

Twenty-eight steamers were escorted north and 31 south.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

A raid on the island of Tyters took place on 30 May without any special damage being inflicted.

2. Own Situation:

One tanker, 1 hospital ship, 8 transports and 2 submarines were escorted within the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Ten vessels were detailed to sweep the channels.

One minesweeping plane swept one mine in the Samsoe Belt. One ground mine was swept north of Arnoey.

The ferry service Sassnitz - Trelleborg has once more been resumed.

The anti-submarine hunt in the northern sector of Danzig Bay has been broken off.

One tug capsized off Rixhoeft because of the seaway and the deck cargo going over board.

The minesweeping work off Windau had to be cancelled because of the weather.

The Finns laid three indicator nets off Porkalla. The submarine patrol behind the nets was carried out as planned.

Three mine explosions were observed northwest of Tyters. A large oil patch was found near the place of the explosions. It is not yet certain whether a submarine has been damaged. Depth charges were dropped 20 miles southwest of Vaindlo on 28 May on a submarine which had already been hunted several times, and resulted in oil and air bubbles appearing on the surface in large quantities. Its destruction can be assumed as definite. On 30 May another submarine was located and hunted in the same locality, extensive oil patches were detected. In this way five boats have so far been destroyed and one damaged.

A large enemy formation of ships in tow sailing under cover of the Karelian coast was fired on by artillery on 29 May.

Several enemy strongholds facing the emplacements of the Naval Artillery Detachment "531" in the Voronka sector were destroyed on 27 and 28 May. Fierce artillery and mortar action against our own positions.

A strong assault detachment was repulsed in close combat.

Special Items.

Group North, Fleet Command has issued instructions to the naval forces regarding anti-submarine warnings in the Baltic Sea. In case of an anti-submarine alarm in Danzig Bay the boats must put into port. In case of an anti-submarine alarm in the central and eastern Baltic Sea transfers of ships may only be carried out under anti-submarine escort of at least one destroyer or one torpedo boat. The exercises of destroyers, torpedo boats and PT boats are not subject to any restrictions. Readiness for anti-submarine combat must at all times be ensured. (Telegram 1148.)

V. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

The following convoys have been reported by agents whose reliability has not yet been assessed:

1. A very large convoy escorted by an aircraft carrier and alleged to include 20 troop transports is said to have been half-way between the Bermudas and the Azores on 28 May, course northeast.

2. A convoy is said to have left the U.S.A. for Great Britain on 26 May. The probability exists that this convoy will split up off Iceland and that a number of the ships will pass on to Murmansk.

3. Departure on 29 May of a convoy from Freetown to Gibraltar.

4. Between 1 and 3 June eleven transports and a very large number of freighters are to leave the ports of Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston bound for North Africa.

5. One transport of 22,000 BRT alleged to have 5,000 U.S. troops aboard is said to have put into Casablanca on 21 May.

6. Further transports arrived in Casablanca on 23 May. The cargoes are alleged to have consisted of 6,000 troops and different kinds of war materiel, particularly a large number of amphibious craft.

2. Own Situation:

The submarine en route to Japan sighted an eastbound convoy with carrier-borne aircraft escort between Freetown and Pernambuco on 29 May. As the boats had orders not to attack convoys it proceeded on its way. One steamer of about 7,000 BRT was sunk south of Freetown.

In spite of requests no report has been received for 15 days from the first Italian cargo submarine which put to sea. The boat must be presumed lost. Another Italian submarine, which was to have been converted into a cargo submarine has not put into port yet; this boat must also be considered lost.

Special Items.

I. Naval Staff, Submarine Division has submitted a report on the convoy operation No. 3 which was carried out in the North Atlantic in March and which must be regarded as the most successful yet of the war. (1/Skl 16042/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. IV.)

II. Naval Staff, Submarine Division reports proposals with regard to the operational employment of the new torpedo G 7 E S (cover name "Falke"). This torpedo represents the predecessor to the G 7 E S anti-destroyer torpedo (cover name "Zaunkoenig") which will be used a few months later. Attention is drawn to the necessity of keeping this new weapon particularly secret. (1/Skl 15785/43 Gkdos.)

VI. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

In the western area 139 planes of the 3rd Air Force were operating, five in the Mediterranean.

During the evening hours 20 FW 190's were dispatched to operate against towns of minor importance on the south coast of England.

One Liberator was shot down 120 miles west-northwest of Brest.

A group of ten steamers was attacked without success west of Cape St. Vincent. One steamer of 4,910 BRT was sunk out of a second group sailing near by.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

For air reconnaissance details see under Situation in the Mediterranean.

In the Aegean Sea two WF 109's engaged four enemy planes in combat without achieving any success.

3. Eastern Front:

Nothing to report.

VII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

Four destroyers put into Gibraltar on the evening of 29 May.

On the morning of 30 May twelve transports, one small auxiliary carrier, and about nine escort vessels passed through the Straits of Gibraltar westbound; they were joined by eight more transports, the INVINCIBLE, one auxiliary carrier, and two destroyers coming from Gibraltar. The FORMIDABLE, the KING

GEORGE V, and the HOWE left for the Mediterranean at noon on 30 May. In the afternoon one convoy of 27 freighters, one tanker, and one auxiliary cruiser put into Gibraltar from the Atlantic.

About 59 vessels passed Tangier on the night of 30 May, bound for the Mediterranean.

Air reconnaissance reports the following:

On 29 May north of Mers el Kebir one carrier, eight destroyers or PT boats, course east;

on 30 May off La Galite five vessels, course southwest;
off Bizerta two PT boats;
off Kelibia six vessels and several patrol vessels;
south of Lampedusa, destroyers.

Submarines were reported off Cape Colonne and off Punto Stilo.

It has been reported from Vichy that the landing of the Allies on Sardinia is planned for 15 June.

2. Own Situation:

Three Italian submarines were in the operational area. The Spanish destroyer did not find any further survivors of the submarine U "755" apart from the nine men reported picked up recently, and discontinued the search.

The PT boats could not operate on the night of 29 May because of the weather.

Nine auxiliary motor minesweepers arrived in La Maddalena on 29 May.

A severe air raid on Naples took place on 30 May. One steamer was sunk, three steamers and one ferry were damaged, fierce fires raged and damage to buildings was inflicted. On the airfield,hangars were damaged, two of our own planes destroyed, two others damaged; two planes were shot down.

In the course of a raid on Pommigliano the Alfa - Romeo works were hit, eight Me 323's were destroyed on the airfield and ten Me 110's damaged.

An attack on the airfield of Foggia caused serious damage. Five of our own planes were destroyed, twelve damaged; one plane was shot down.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

Three steamers put into Albia with the fast escorts SG "13" and "14" and the torpedo boat of foreign origin TA "10".

Transport movements to the islands ran without special incident.

Special Items.

I. The German Naval Command, Italy reports the following vessels of the Italian Fleet operational as from 29 May:

3 battleships
4 light cruisers (8,000 t)
1 light cruiser (5,000 t)
13 destroyers
30 torpedo boats, partly very antiquated (Adriatic Sea)
12 corvettes
29 large and 5 small submarines
(1/Skl 15762/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XII).

II. The German Naval Command, Italy submits a summarized report of the present supply situation to the Italian islands. The supplies to Sardinia are satisfactory, those to Sicily far too small. There is a lack of small shipping which was to a large extent used up in the supply services to Tunisia. The German steamers assigned to the Aegean Sea are to be employed for the time being in the Thyrrenian Sea, according to instructions from the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South. (1/Skl 15758/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

III. The German Naval Command, Italy has set out in detail its requirements in harbor gear which is to be provided from the area of Group West. The following are requested:

50 lighters,
20 small tugs,
10 floating derricks,
launches and
fire fighter boats.
(Telegram 2250.)

4. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The net barrage between the mole-heads of Candia has been completed.

One steamer ran a ground north of Prevesa; salvage operations are under way.

The escort duties were carried out according to schedule.

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

The PT boats dispatched to operate near Idokopas on the night of

29 May did not find any traffic. A brief air attack took place off Cape Chauda.

The PT boat S "40" left Constanta for Ivanbaba with three fresh boats.

At noon on 30 May a submarine attack was made on two naval landing craft off Yalta without result. The attack was carried out in the same place as the day before.

One convoy was twice attacked by bombers southwest of Feodosiya. The tug NETTY was sunk.

One Anapa transport was also attacked from the air. One naval landing craft burnt out, a total loss. All nine attacking bombers were shot down by fighters and naval landing craft.

The barrage K "5" was laid according to plan.

The naval artillery lighter MAL "4" arrived in Sevastopol and the MAL "8" and "11" in Constanta. The ferry service ran to schedule.

VIII. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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Items of Political Importance.

Three British naval experts are said to have arrived in Turkey in order to help with the re-organization of the Turkish Fleet.

Planes of the RAF Coastal Command cornered and sank two submarines off Iceland, two in the Bay of Biscay and one in northern waters, the British Air Ministry announces.

The Under Secretary of State for the U.S. Navy Department stated that the destroyers which are fitted with new and secret weapons for anti-submarine combat would next year become the biggest class of warships in the U.S. Navy.

The Chief, Naval Staff has left for conferences at Fuehrer Headquarters.

Conference on the Situation with the Chief, Naval Staff.

I. The Chief, Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff reports that all troop transports have at present been withdrawn from the Mediterranean. Churchill was in Gibraltar for a conference with various generals on 27 and 28 May.

De Gaulle arrived in Algiers on 30 May.

Brazil has turned over the port of Bahia to the U.S.A. as a base.

Conference Restricted to a very Limited Circle.

II. The Chief, German Naval Command, Italy requested Group West for considerable quantities of harbor gear: The Quartermaster General, Naval Staff points out that the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping is responsible for the supply of things of this kind and that a muddle would result if the Navy attended to the supply of such goods. The Chief of Staff, Naval Staff has ordered the Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division to inform the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping of the requests of the German Naval Command, Italy and ask him to take the necessary action.

Submarines repeatedly reported location by fishing smacks in the Bay of Biscay. Group West is to report whether it will be possible to have these reports checked by destroyers.

Special Items.

I. So far 16 PT boats have been fitted with one automatic 4 cm C/28 Bofors

anti-aircraft gun. After the serial construction of the new fully automatic 3.7 cm anti-aircraft artillery has commenced, the other PT boats will be equipped with this weapon. (1/Skl III a 15838/43 Gkdos.)

II. The Commander Destroyers reported the possibility of the torpedo boat J "25" taking part in minelaying operations. This proposal is now withdrawn, as the torpedo boat J "25" will have to stay another three weeks in the dockyard for repairs to the condensers. (1/Skl 15654/43 Gkdos.)

III. With regard to the delay in the installation of the equipment for the use of a helicopter on the minelayer ELSASS the Naval (Ship) Construction Division (see War Diary, Part A, 21 May) reports that the enlargement of the landing platform requested delayed the preparatory work. (1/Skl 15644/43 Gkdos.)

IV. Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division submits a report on the use of British special troops and small vessels for the removal of the harbor barrages of Tripoli. (1/Skl 16515/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Appendix "Material on the Enemy Situation".)

Situation 31 May.

I. War in Foreign Waters.

Nothing to report.

II. Situation West Area.

1. Enemy Situation:

Our air reconnaissance reported seven merchantmen and two destroyers southeast of Orfordness, course north.

Thirty-seven planes were detected operating off the Bay of Biscay.

2. Own Situation:

Area Atlantic Coast:

A mine-exploding vessel was seriously damaged by a ground mine off La Pallice. Two mines were swept off the Gironde and off St. Nazaire.

Channel Area:

The 5th Torpedo Boat Flotilla laid the barrage G "9" northwest of Cherbourg.

Two tugs were sunk and one steamer in the dock was damaged in the course of an air attack on Cherbourg at noon on 31 May.

Flushing was attacked in the afternoon. Two ferry boats, 1 buoy layer, and 3 barges sank, 1 floating derrick was damaged, 2 minesweepers were beached. Damage was inflicted on houses in the town and in the dockyard.

Only slight damage was caused by an attack on Zeebrugge.

The report on the minelaying operation by PT boats on the night of 30 May was supplemented as follows:

The 4th and 6th PT Boat Flotillas operated according to plan; on their return passage they were attacked with bombs and machine-gun fire; no losses. The 2nd PT Boat Flotilla was continuously located and passed over by night fighters which towed a fairly large ball behind them emitting a red light; no attack occurred. The 5th PT Boat Flotilla met with no special incidents.

The wreck of a British PT boat which was detected after the engagement off Gravelines on 28 and 29 May sank while being towed off.

Special Items.

The Chief, Naval Staff expressed his special appreciation to the 8th Motor Minesweeper Flotilla and 36th Minesweeper Flotilla for their bravery on 28 and 29 May.

III. North Sea, Norway, Northern Waters.

1. North Sea:

The escort and patrol boat duties in the region of the Commanding Admiral, North Sea, Defenses were carried out without any special incident.

Eight ground mines were swept off Scheveningen and two off Schiermonikoog.

2. Norway, Northern Waters:

Enemy Situation:

According to radio intelligence three Russian submarines were off the Norwegian Arctic coast. Two destroyers and two freighters were between Chernaya and Kola Bay on the evening of 31 May. In the course of the day ten Russian planes were operating in the area of Murmansk and three flying boats over the Barents Sea.

Brisk reconnaissance was carried out over the North Sea by 34 planes, only one plane was detected in the Iceland area.

Own Situation:

One of our own convoys was unsuccessfully attacked with two torpedoes from a submarine off the Baesfjord. A submarine hunt is in progress.

Magnetic adhesive mines were found hidden in rocky cliffs in the course of a search on the island of Arnoe. The material was of recent origin and had presumably been brought ashore by Russian submarines.

The floating dock convoy for Narvik left Arlandet continuing its passage north.

Thirty-two ships were escorted north and 21 south. Eight ships had to remain in Kristiansand South because of the lack of escort vessels.

IV. Skagerrak, Baltic Sea Entrances, Baltic Sea.

1. Enemy Situation:

Guard ship traffic and reconnaissance flights over the coastal territory in Kronstadt Bay were as usual. Five enemy PT boats or motor minesweepers were sighted off Tyters on the evening of 30 May; later on nine explosions were heard. It is presumed that minesweeping is in progress.

One Russian guard ship was set on fire by our planes off Lavansaari.

2. Own Situation:

One steamer and 3 transports were escorted and 13 vessels dispatched to sweep the channels in the region of the Commanding Admiral, Defenses, Baltic. Two ground mines were swept in the Little Belt. One motor vessel of 371 BRT carrying military gear ran aground on the northern tip of Dagoe.

Off Vaindlo one enemy submarine was hunted by naval landing craft, which had been dispatched to the spot by air reconnaissance. Another group of naval landing craft shelled a surfaced submarine in Kolka Bay on the night of 31 May.

Special Items.

The Air Force torpedo training wing has been transferred to Riga. Naval Station Baltic requests that the Commander in Chief, Air Force be asked for permission to operate these planes, as far as the training of the crews allows, if the Russian fleet should attempt to break out of the Gulf of Finland. (See Telegram 1247.)

V. Merchant Shipping.

Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Shipping and Transport Branch in a letter to the Commander in Chief, Air Force, Operations Staff underlines the heavily increased demand for anti-aircraft guns for merchantmen in the Mediterranean and announces that the Navy will only be able to arm about 25% of the ships and that demands already placed with the Air Force remain unaltered. (1/Skl 16046/43 Gkdos.).

VI. Submarine Warfare.

1. Enemy Situation:

A very reliable agent reports from Canada, date 17 May:

The first large wheat transport left the Gulf of the St. Lawrence early in May. The convoy comprised 57 ships and was the largest ever to be dispatched from Canada. 90% of the cargo consisted of wheat. The convoy is said to be escorted by at least 14 escort vessels as well as two cruisers and one or two aircraft carriers and was off St. John's on 6 May. From there on its course is not known. A second wheat convoy carrying approximately 650,000 t of cattle fodder, wheat, barley, oats, etc. will be dispatched about the second week in June. Preparations are under way.

On 30 May the radio station at Reykjavik broadcast that an unidentified vessel had been torpedoed west of Iceland. An attack by submarine is out of question. It is possible that this was a mine which was planted by the submarine U "117" in October 1942 and should have become inactive after 80 days, in other words since the end of December. This is the second report of a ship having been allegedly torpedoed in this sea area. It is being investigated whether the mines were actually set for 80 days or whether there is a possibility of the timing mechanism having failed.

2. Own Situation:

One eastbound and one westbound convoy is expected today in the area covered by Group "Trutz".

A submarine tanker fought the attacks of two four-engined planes in the Bay of Biscay for 24 minutes and shot down one of them. Another boat was sunk by bombs in the Bay of Biscay. The attacking plane reported the crew afloat in the water. A submarine speeding to the rescue was damaged by bombs to such an extent as to be only partly able to dive. It is proposed to dispatch planes, destroyers and, if possible, torpedo boats to pick up survivors.

In the Cape area one British vessel of 5,231 BRT was sunk.

Because of the high losses in the Bay of Biscay it has been ordered with effect from 3 June that boats must no longer put out individually. The passage across the Bay of Biscay will have to be made in groups of two or three boats so as to counter attacking planes with increased defensive action.

Special Items.

1. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Submarine Branch submits the executive order for the fitting of submarines with four-barrelled guns. (1/Skl 15837/43 geh.)

2. Naval Staff, Quartermaster Division, Submarine Branch has issued a statistical report, from which can be seen the effects of the increase to 30 submarines monthly in the submarine construction program. (Skl Qu. A/U 1774/43 Gkdos. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. V.)

3. The Commander in Chief, Navy in his capacity as Commanding Admiral, Submarines had a thorough investigation made of the severe submarine losses recently suffered, and in connection herewith issued a directive to the submarine commanders and officers, appealing to them to overcome the present submarine crisis. (1/Skl 1545/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

VII. Aerial Warfare.

1. British Isles and Vicinity:

Of the 3rd Air Force 172 planes including 162 fighters were operating in the western area, eight planes in the Mediterranean.

During the day two planes were shot down by fighters and two by anti-aircraft artillery.

Three of our bombers carried out a harassing raid on London in the course of the night.

No enemy planes flew over our territory on the night of 31 May.

2. Mediterranean Theater:

By day La Valetta was attacked by fighter-bombers. By night Sousse was bombed. No report on results has been received.

3. Eastern Front:

On 29 and 30 May 108 enemy planes were shot down to a loss of eleven of our own.

Anti-tank infantry annihilated ten boats in the sea of Asov.

Ten planes were dispatched to foul the Volga on the night of 30 May. In the period 28 Apr. - 21 May the Volga was fouled with 294 mines. Reconnaissance reveals this had considerable effect on shipping.

VIII. War in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

1. Enemy Situation in the Mediterranean:

The transport that entered Gibraltar from the Mediterranean on 30 May left, presumably for the Atlantic, the same night. Various movements of minor groups of vessels were observed in the course of 30 May. The large convoy reported from Tangiers put into Gibraltar at noon. Ten vessels of this convoy, eight of them presumably tankers, passed on to the Mediterranean. In the afternoon 25 British LCT's arrived from the Atlantic.

No reports concerning Task Force H have been received.

Photographic reconnaissance on 31 May confirms a noticeable shifting of landing craft to the Tunisian and adjacent ports.

Convoy traffic off the Algerian coast was medium. In Bizerta 15 large vessels were sighted alongside the quay on the afternoon of 30 May. On the night of 30 May enemy warships including one cruiser and two destroyers were cruising near Pantelleria.

Brisk small vessel shipping off Cape Bon.

Enemy submarines are reported off Cape Spartivento, Maddalena and Toulon.

The following vessels were in La Valetta on 30 May according to photographic reconnaissance: 2 light cruisers, 6 destroyers, 14 submarines, 23 auxiliary naval vessels and 7 freighters.

2. Own Situation in the Mediterranean:

Three Italian submarines were in the operational area.

To supplement the submarines operating in the Mediterranean it has been planned to transfer these three boats there. The passage through the Straits of Gibraltar will have to be made during the next few days.

The operation by ten PT boats in the sea area around Pantelleria was without any results. A silhouette, presumably that of a destroyer, was pursued without success.

Pantelleria was attacked by enemy planes and shelled from the sea on the night of 30 May. The largest part of the water wells was destroyed, and the water supply of the island is in danger.

The tanker PRAESIDENT HERRENSCHMIDT (9,100 BRT) was severely damaged by a direct hit in the course of the air raid on Naples on 30 May. The ship is on fire. One Italian ammunition steamer exploded. The Naval food supply office together with warehouse was almost entirely destroyed.

Enemy air raids were carried out on the following places:

Cagliari: slight damage; three planes shot down;

Foggia: airfield, hangars, billets, and eight of our own planes were destroyed; four planes shot down. Explosives in the shape of lead pencils and lighters were dropped on a large scale.

Augusta: no particular damage; one plane shot down.

3. Shipping and Transport Situation:

The escort and transport duties to the Italian islands and the Aegean Sea were carried out without special incident.

Special Items:

1. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South made a situation survey on 30 May, in which both the enemy and our own forces in the Mediterranean are listed. A limited operation from the Tunisian ports, possibly directed against Pantelleria and Lampedusa, seems about to take place judging by conditions as they stand at present. (1/Skl 1576/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

2. Group West reports that work on the barrages planned on the south coast of France has been started with the operation of the minelayer POMMERN. (1/Skl 1574/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

3. The Commanding General, Armed Forces, South in a lengthy report on his available transportation points out to the Armed Forces High Command, the Commander in Chief, Navy, the Commander in Chief, Air Force, and the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping that the supply situation with regard to Sardinia and Sicily is becoming more serious because of the decreasing shipping space and the lack of discharging facilities. It is by incorporating the passenger steamers in Marseilles in the cargo service and in accelerating repairs and work on new constructions to the utmost that the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South sees the last remaining possibilities for rendering assistance. In this connection the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South requests that special construction battalions be furnished. Admiral Ruge has orders from the Commanding General, Armed Forces, South to keep urging the Italian Admiralty to help relieve the situation. (1/Skl 1575/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIV.)

4. Transport Assistance from the southern French area for the traffic to the Italian islands:

Naval Group West reports that the vessels and discharging equipment available in the southern French area were transferred to the Italian area months ago, and there is no hope of any further resources of any consequence. (See Telegram 2350.) The Group nevertheless issued an urgent directive to the Naval Offices in Marseilles and Bordeaux to take all possible measures to assist in the solution of the Italian transport problem and collect and send to Italy everything which might assist in the matter of transportation. (See Telegram 1300.)

According to the report from Group West, the situation with regard to the transfer of the barges on 30 May was such that 130 tank barges are available, 40 of which have left, whereas the freight barges are still being assembled and transferred. The assembly of roughly 700 barges may be counted on in all, including "Seeloewe" barges. The supply of personnel to man these barges is causing particular difficulty. (See Telegram 2315.)

So as to make further barges available the Group requests that 150 barges assigned to Norway be released by the Reich Commissioner of Maritime Shipping. (See Telegram 2200.)

5. Area Naval Group South:

Aegean Sea:

The Spanish steamer RIGEL (549 BRT) was unsuccessfully attacked with torpedoes by a submarine near Volos. After having been shelled the ship was beached. The captain was taken prisoner by the submarine.

The area of Salonica has been closed to small shipping as a result of this incident.

The remaining escort duties in the Aegean Sea were carried out without incident.

Special Items.

1. Naval Staff has informed Group South regarding the situation of the Italian Fleet as on 29 May (1/Skl 1565/43 Gkdos. Chefs. in War Diary, Part C, Vol. XIII).

2. Naval Group Command, South submitted a review of the possible operational commitment of naval forces in the Aegean Sea against an enemy landing operation. Naval Staff agrees in principle with the operational views of the Group, but considers enemy landings in the Calamata - Patras area as likely to be secondary operations incidental to a main operation launched farther north.

A request made by Group South in this connection, for the allocation of Italian Naval Forces cannot be met, as the requested vessels represent practically the

whole of the present operational Italian Fleet. At present the possibility of enemy landings still appears concentrated in the western Mediterranean so that the transfer of portions of the Italian Fleet to the Aegean Sea is out of the question. It is for the same reason that German and Italian PT boat flotillas cannot be allocated either.

The attention of Group South is drawn to the necessity of maintaining close contact with Italian commands for purposes of defense, and co-ordination of operational views, and of keeping the German Naval Command, Italy continuously informed of the plans of the Group. (1/Skl I opa. 1517/43 Gkdos. Chefs.)

Black Sea:

Enemy Situation:

Enemy PT boats were sighted off Anapa on the night of 29 May and withdrew when fired on.

On the night of 30 May one enemy PT boat fired a torpedo which missed its mark on the wreck of a naval landing craft stranded off Anapa.

Enemy planes dropped what appeared to be mines west of Berdiansk. The channel has been closed to shipping.

Own Situation:

It has been reported retrospectively that two planes were definitely shot down and a third set on fire during the air attack on the Anapa transport, in the course of which one tug was sunk.

The barrage K "6" has been laid according to plan.

The coastal defense in Temriuk Bay reported brisk air activity on the night of 30 May.

The naval artillery lighter MAL "4" is en route from Sevastopol to Kerch.

Ferry traffic ran according to plan.

Special Items.

Group South on request of Naval Staff reports that only one enemy submarine can be regarded as destroyed as a result of anti-submarine activity in the period Nov. 1942 to Jan. 1943. It is improbable that any of the other anti-submarine combats resulted in destruction.

According to statements made by Russian prisoners, however, at least three submarines were lost in Rumanian waters, which apparently ran into our own minefields laid there. (1/Skl 15782/43 Gkdos.)

IX. Situation East Asia.

Nothing to report.

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(Bremen)